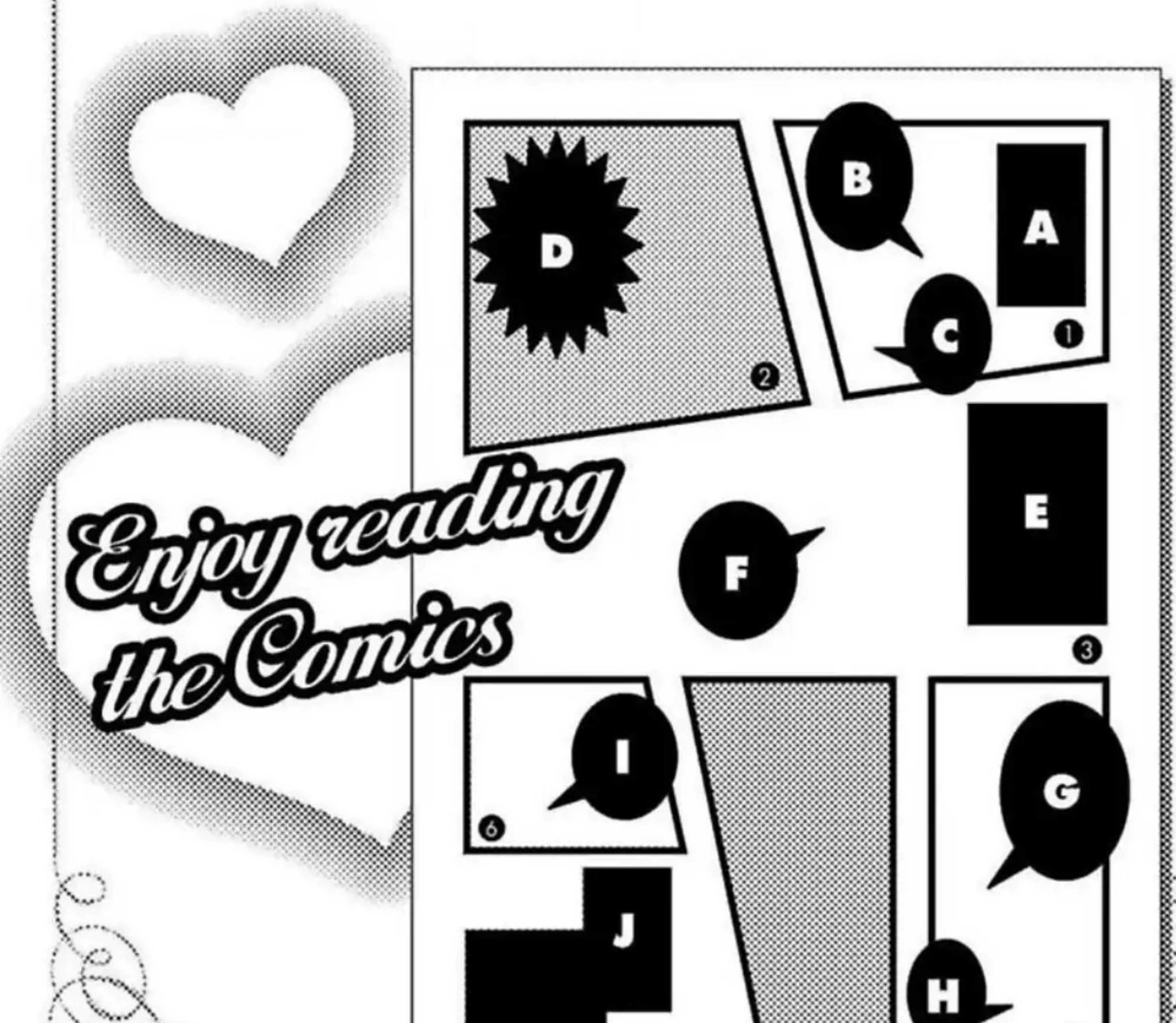
MAIDEN BRIDE 1

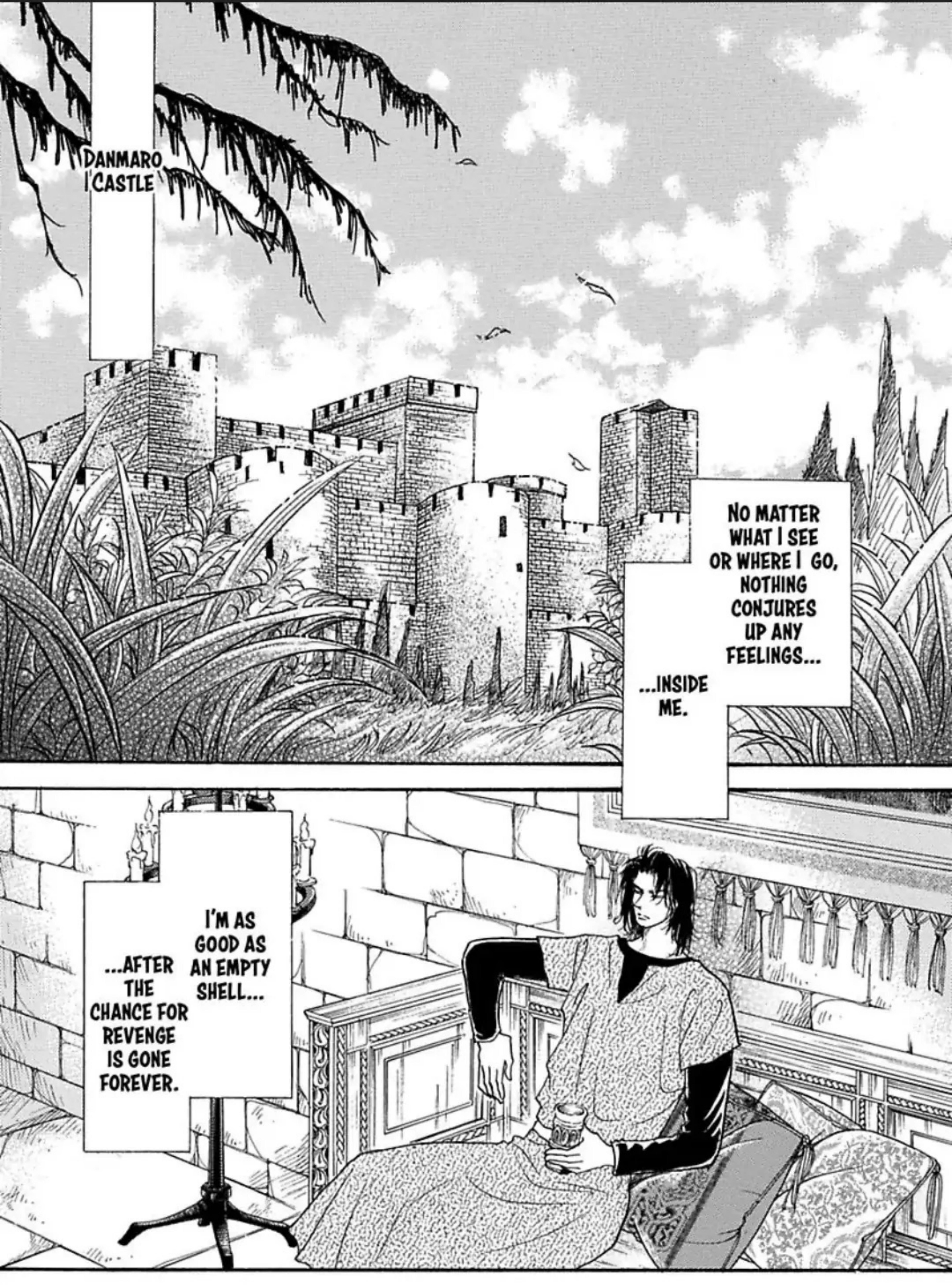
Original novel by Deborah Simmons

Nanao Hidaka

BEFORE YOU READ!

Manga books started in Japan, where books are read from right to left. To make this manga more fun, we've kept the original format. In case you haven't read a manga before, we've made the diagram below to SHOW YOU HOW! Once you get started, you'll find it's fun and easy to read this way!!


A
B
C
①
D
②
E
F
③
G
H
④
⑤
I
⑥
J
⑦
Enjoy reading the Comics


DANMARO CASTLE
NO MATTER WHAT I SEE OR WHERE I GO, NOTHING CONJURES UP ANY FEELINGS...
...INSIDE ME.
I'M AS GOOD AS AN EMPTY SHELL...
...AFTER THE CHANCE FOR REVENGE IS GONE FOREVER.

I'M LIKE A LIVING CORPSE.

花嫁①

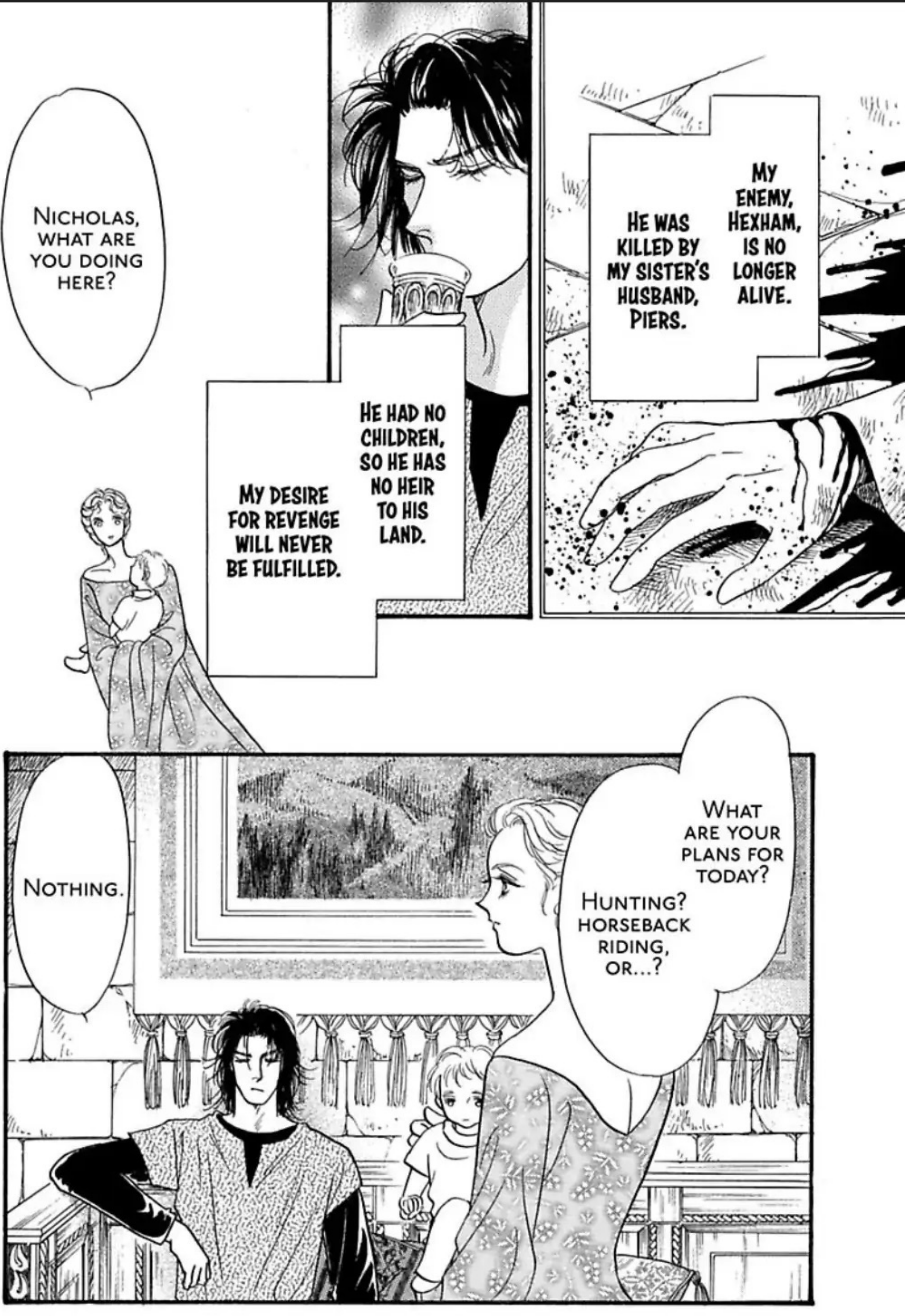
●Nanao Hidaka●

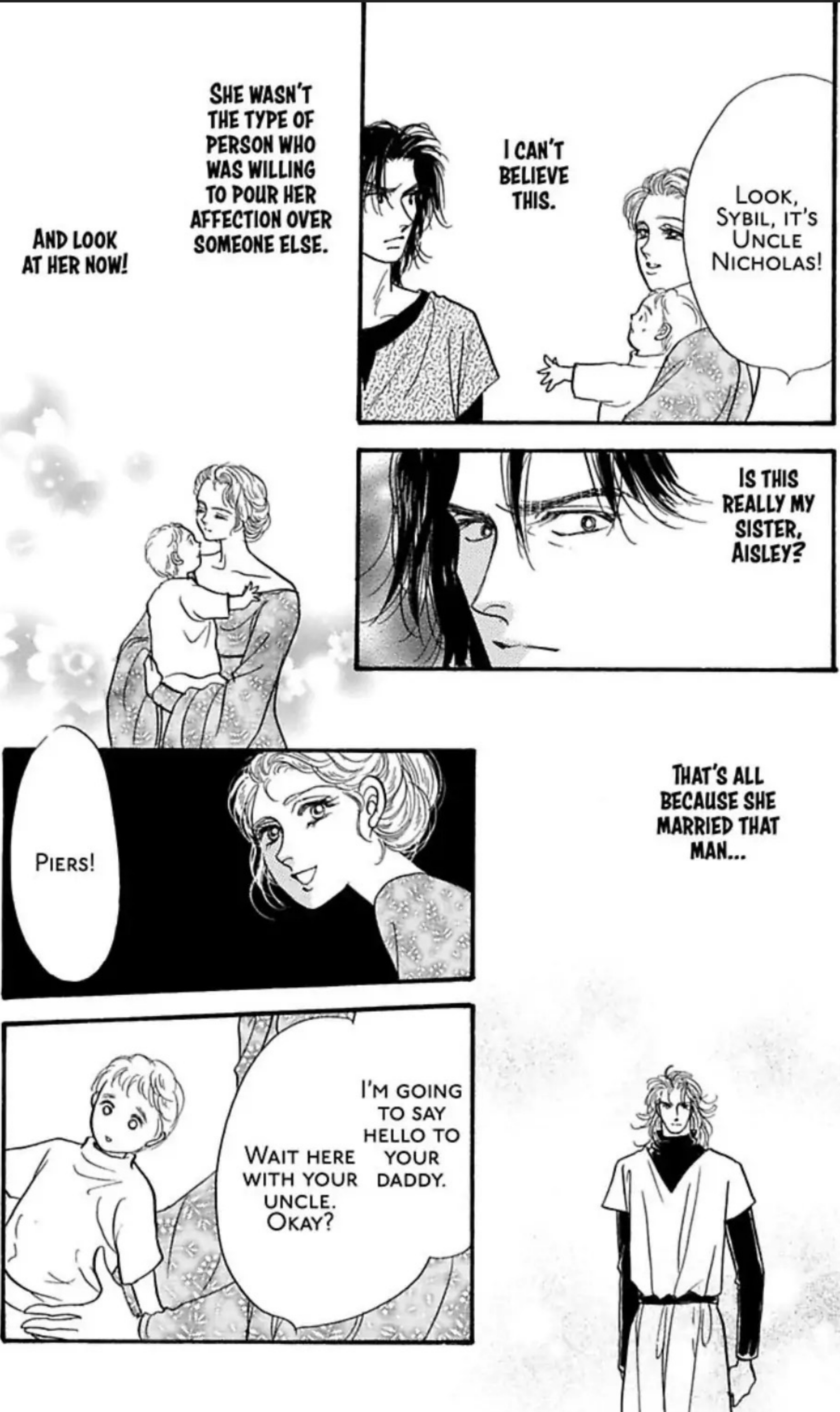
日高七緒

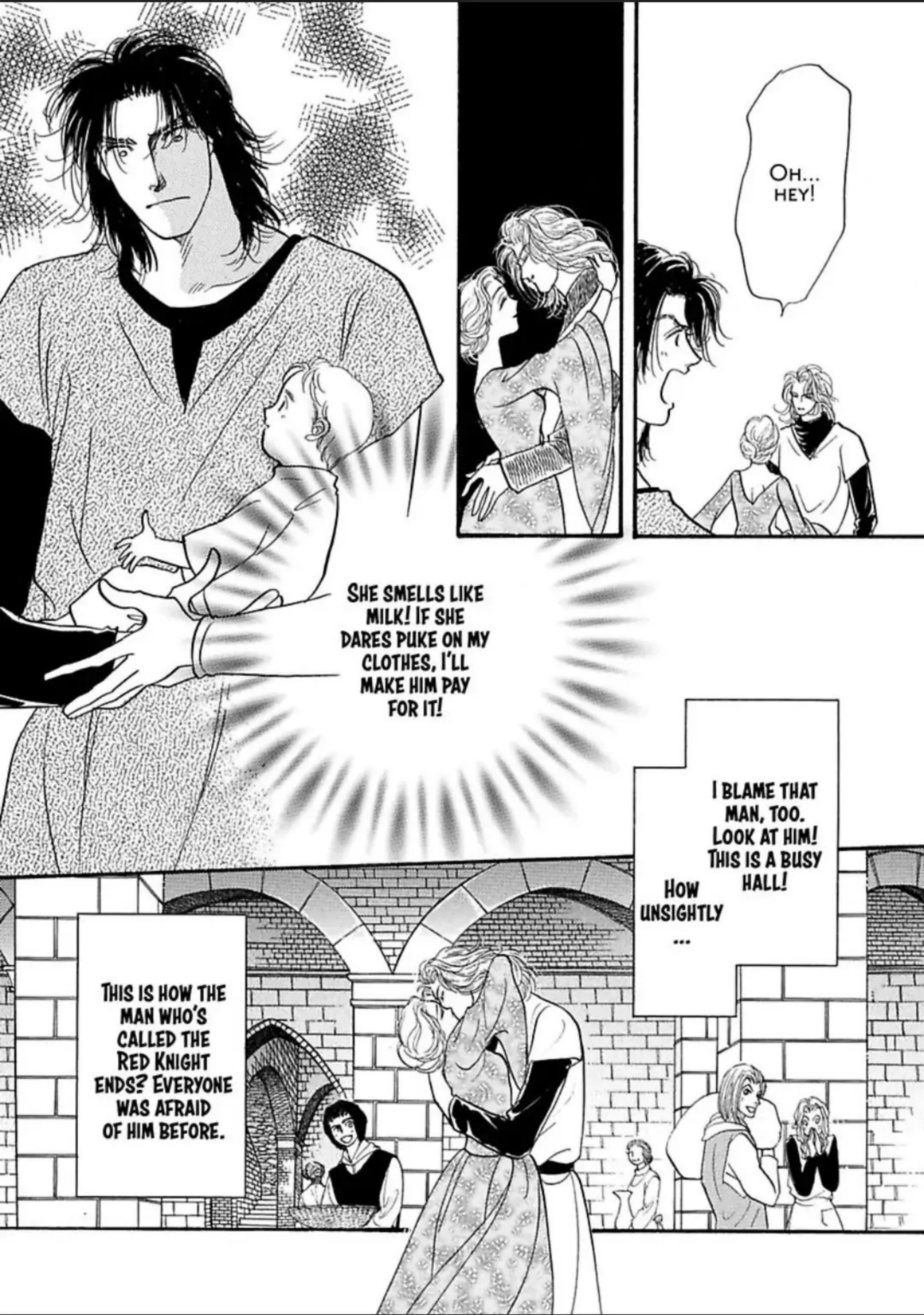
Original novel by Deborah Simmons

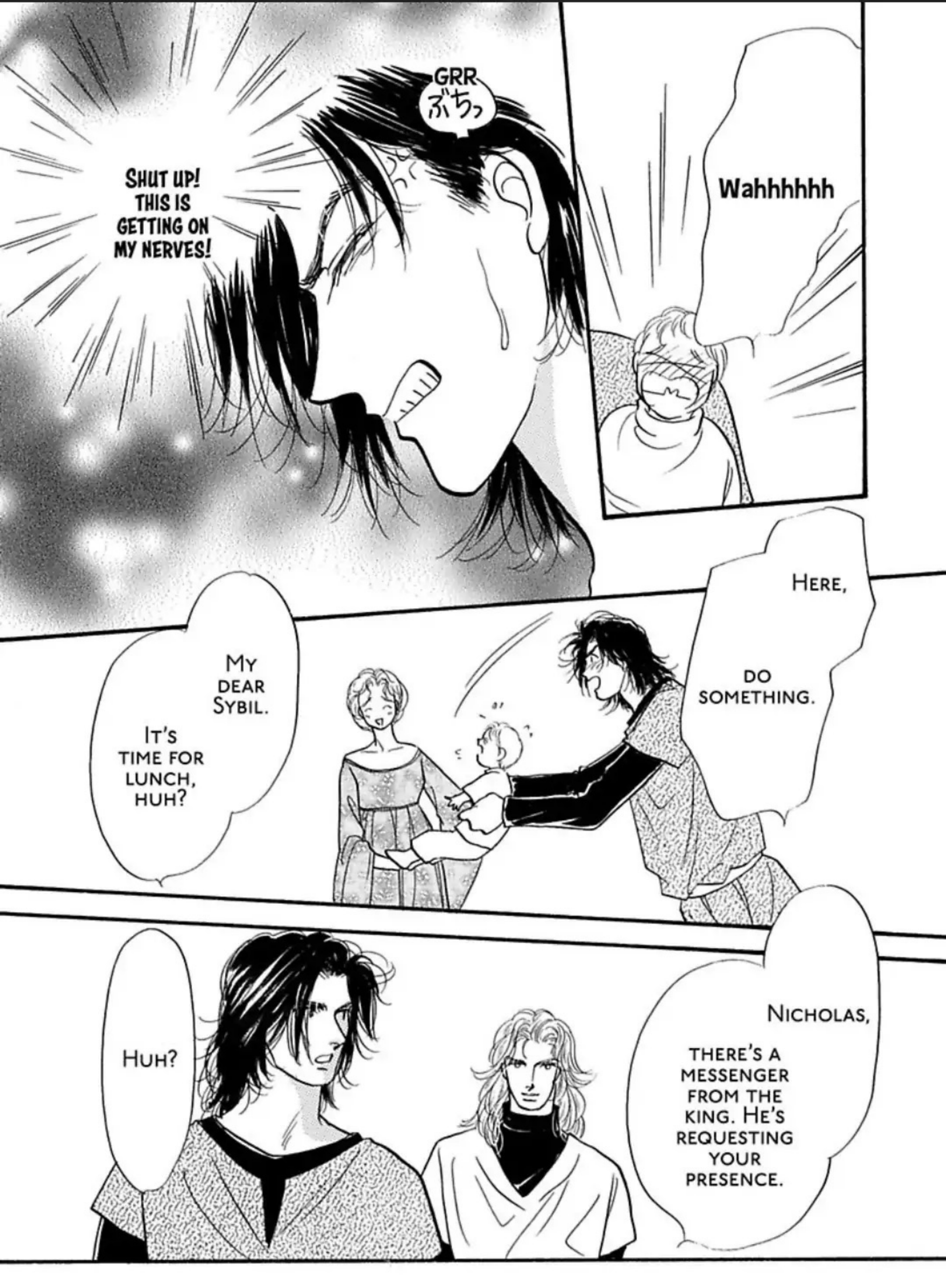
尼僧院から来た

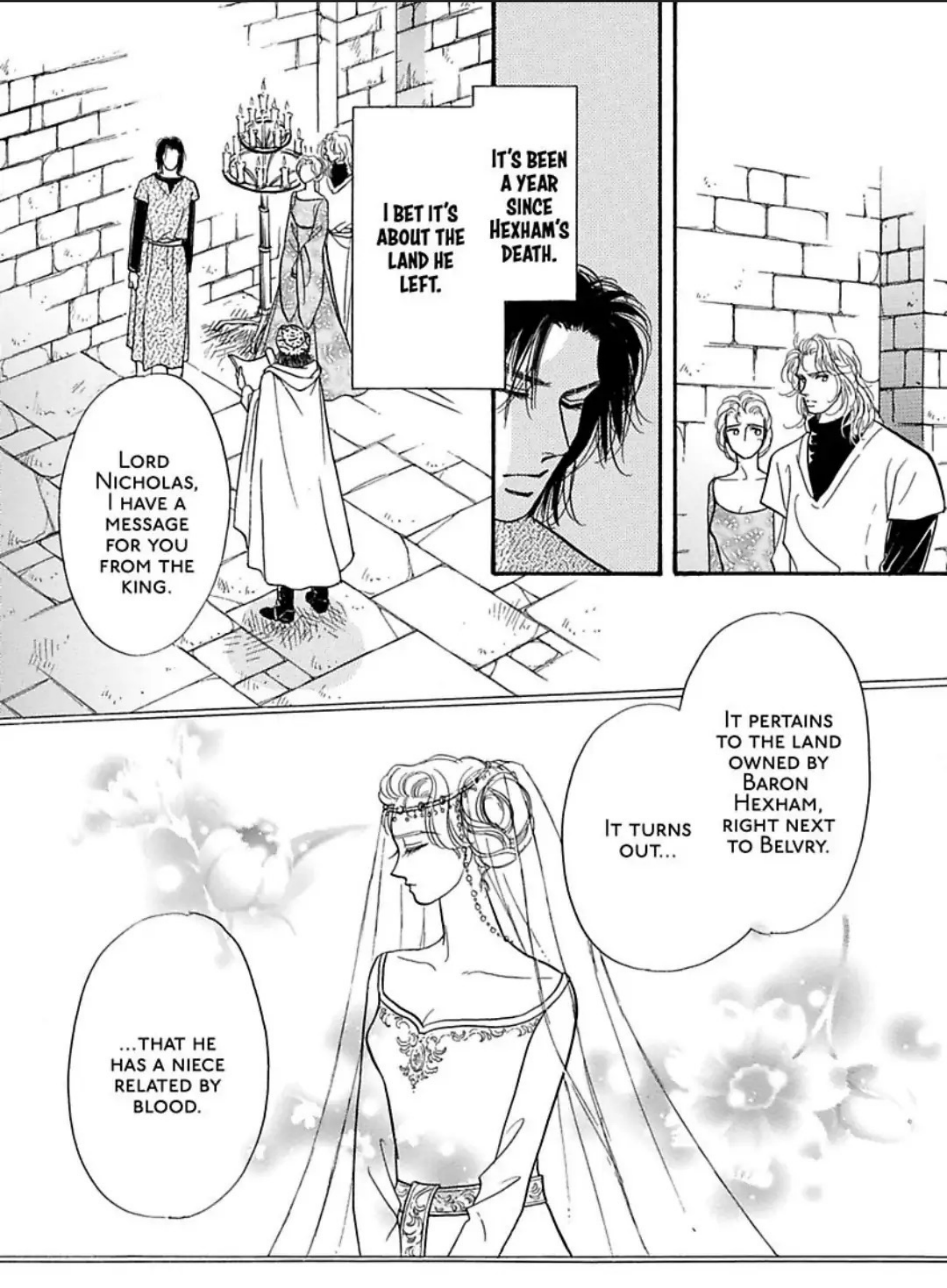
MAIDEN BRIDE

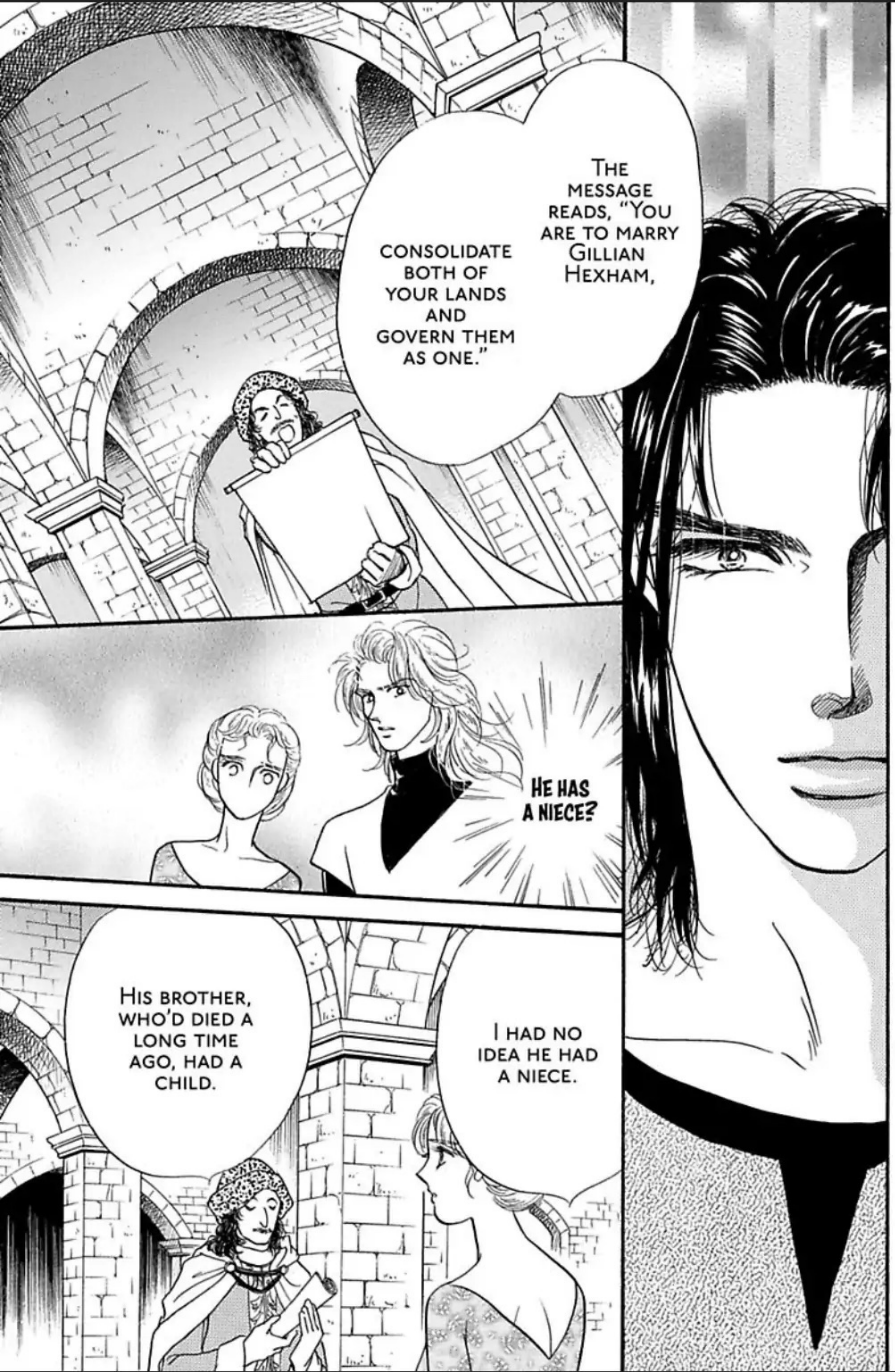

My enemy, Hexham, is no longer alive.
He was killed by my sister's husband, Piers.
He had no children, so he has no heir to his land.
My desire for revenge will never be fulfilled.
Nicholas, what are you doing here?
What are your plans for today?
Hunting? horseback riding, or...?
Nothing.

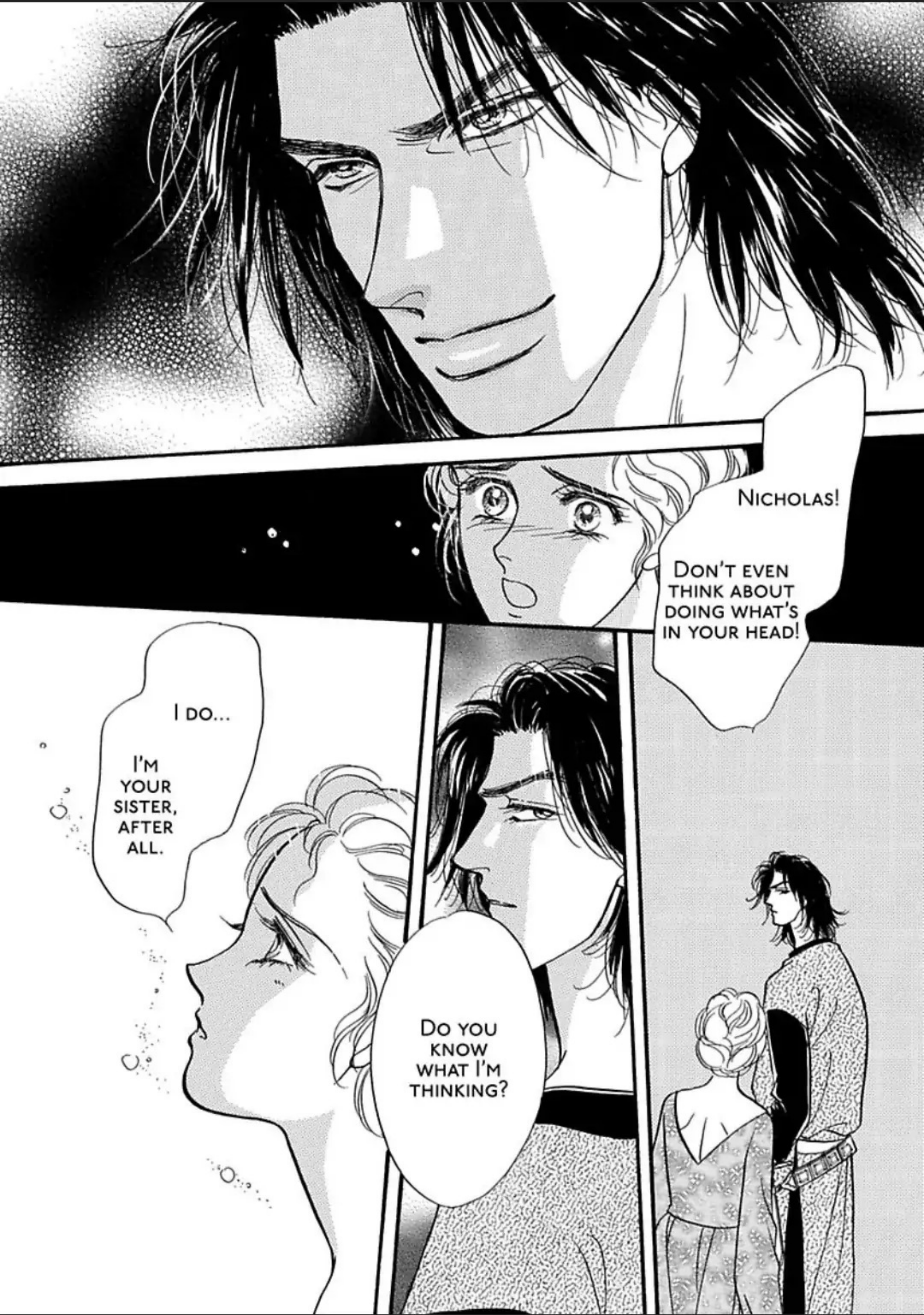

Look, Sybil, it's Uncle Nicholas!
I can't believe this.
She wasn't the type of person who was willing to pour her affection over someone else.
And look at her now!
Is this really my sister, Aisley?
That's all because she married that man...
Piers!
I'm going to say hello to your daddy.
Wait here with your uncle. Okay?

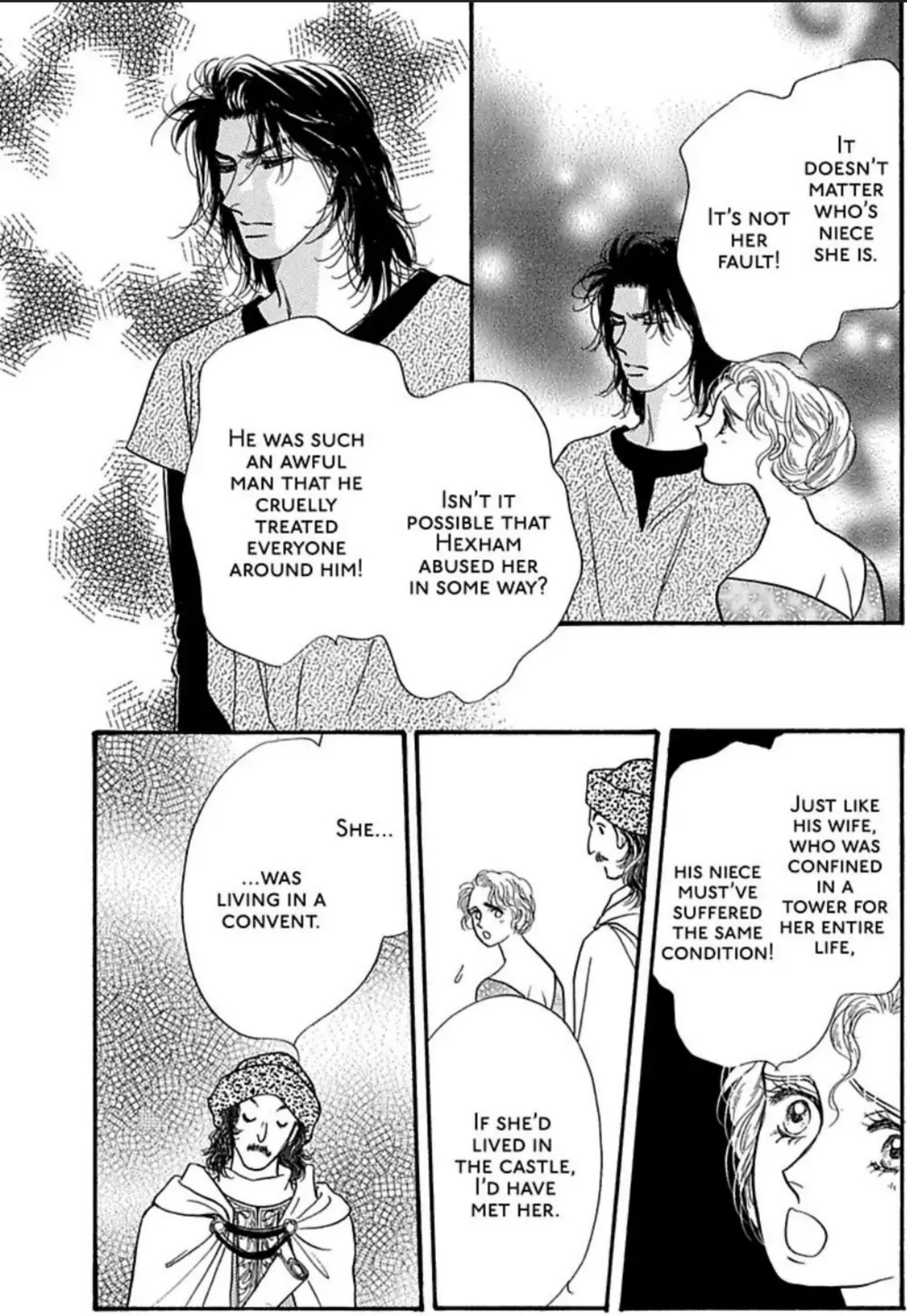

Oh... hey!
She smells like milk! If she dares puke on my clothes, I'll make him pay for it!
I blame that man, too. Look at him! This is a busy hall!
How unsightly...
This is how the man who's called the Red Knight ends? Everyone was afraid of him before.

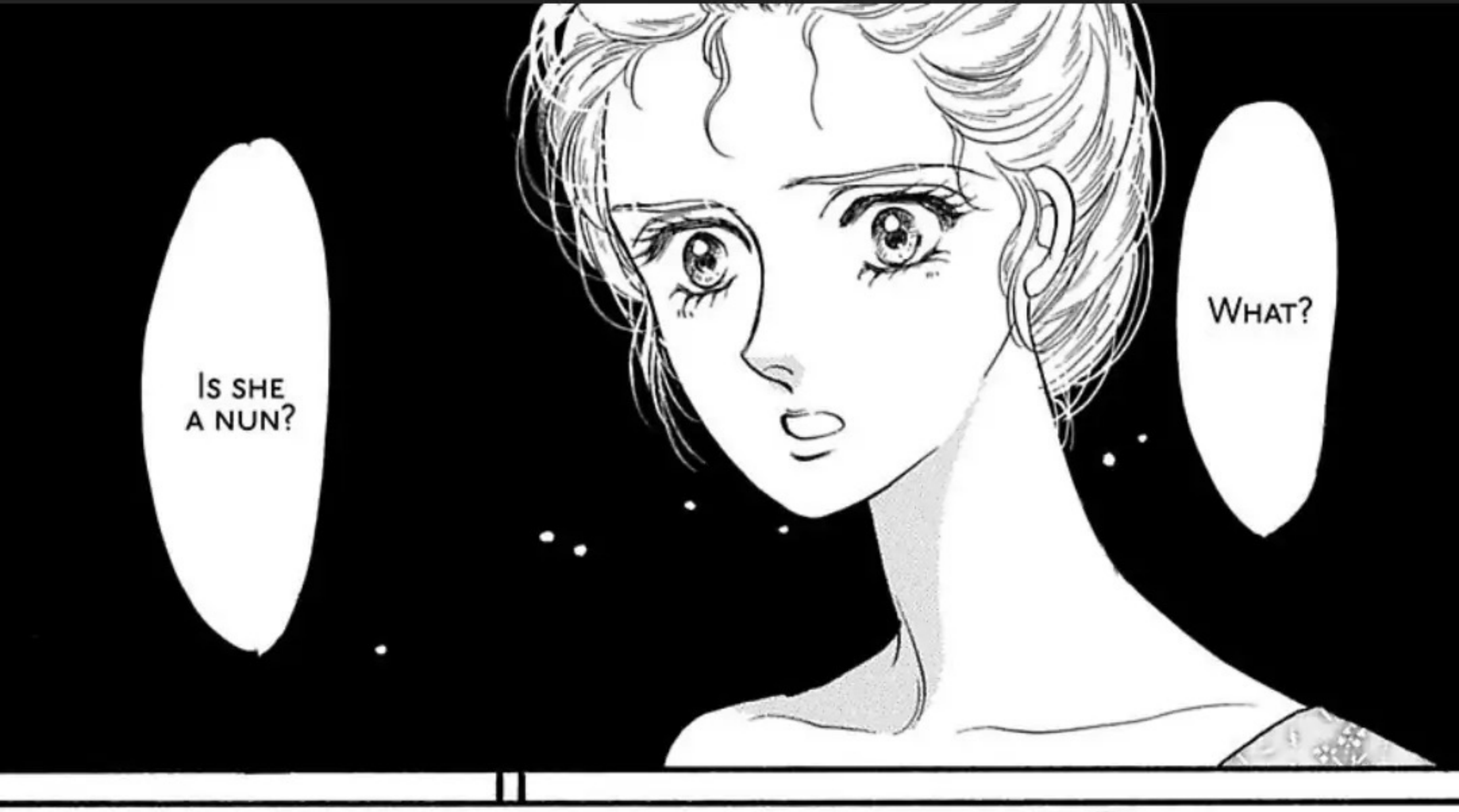

Wahhhhh
GRR
ぶちっ
SHUT UP! THIS IS GETTING ON MY NERVES!
HERE, DO SOMETHING.
MY DEAR SYBIL. IT'S TIME FOR LUNCH, HUH?
NICHOLAS, THERE'S A MESSENGER FROM THE KING. HE'S REQUESTING YOUR PRESENCE.
HUH?

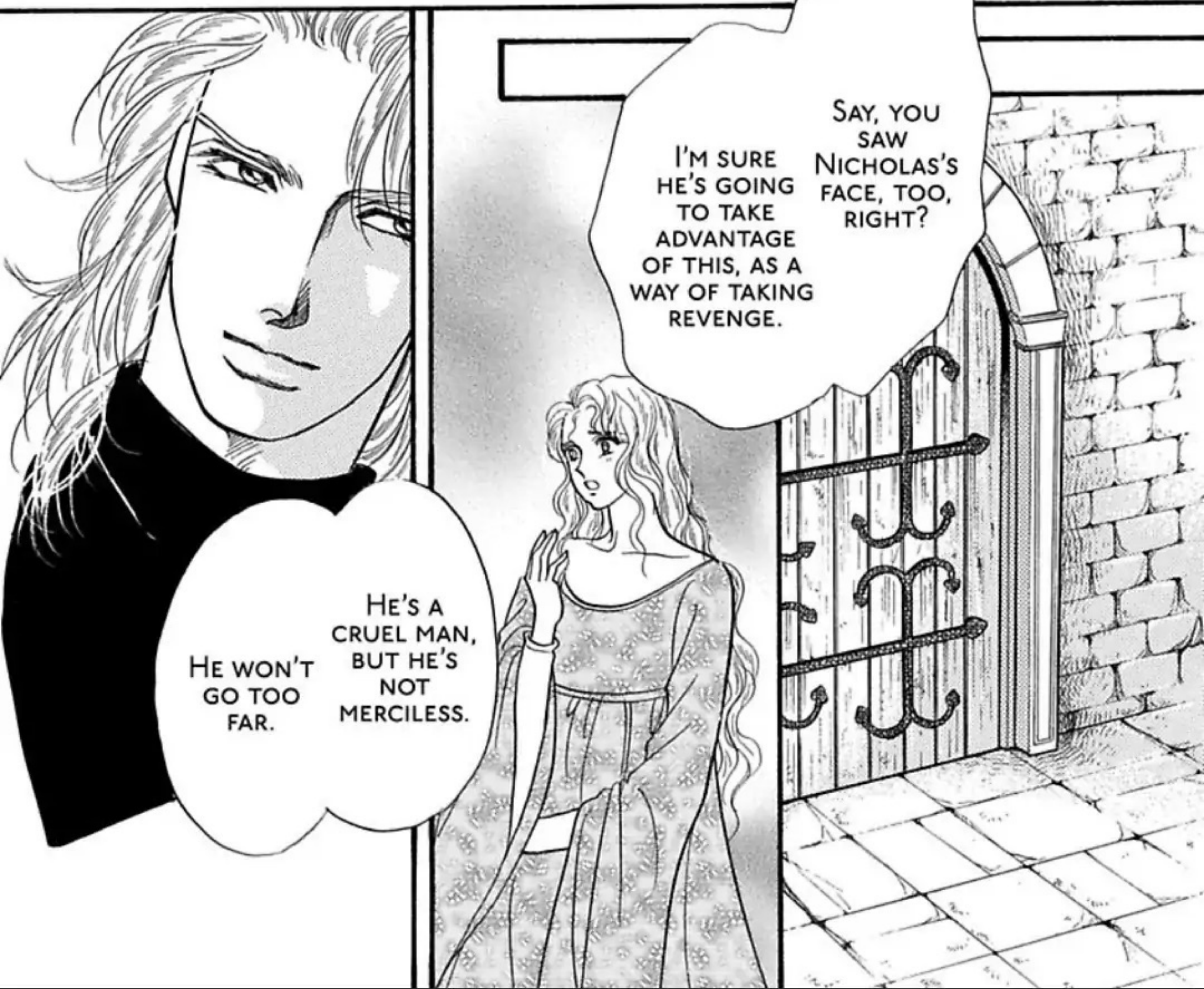

It's been a year since Hexham's death.
I bet it's about the land he left.
Lord Nicholas, I have a message for you from the king.
It pertains to the land owned by Baron Hexham, right next to Belvry.
It turns out...
...that he has a niece related by blood.

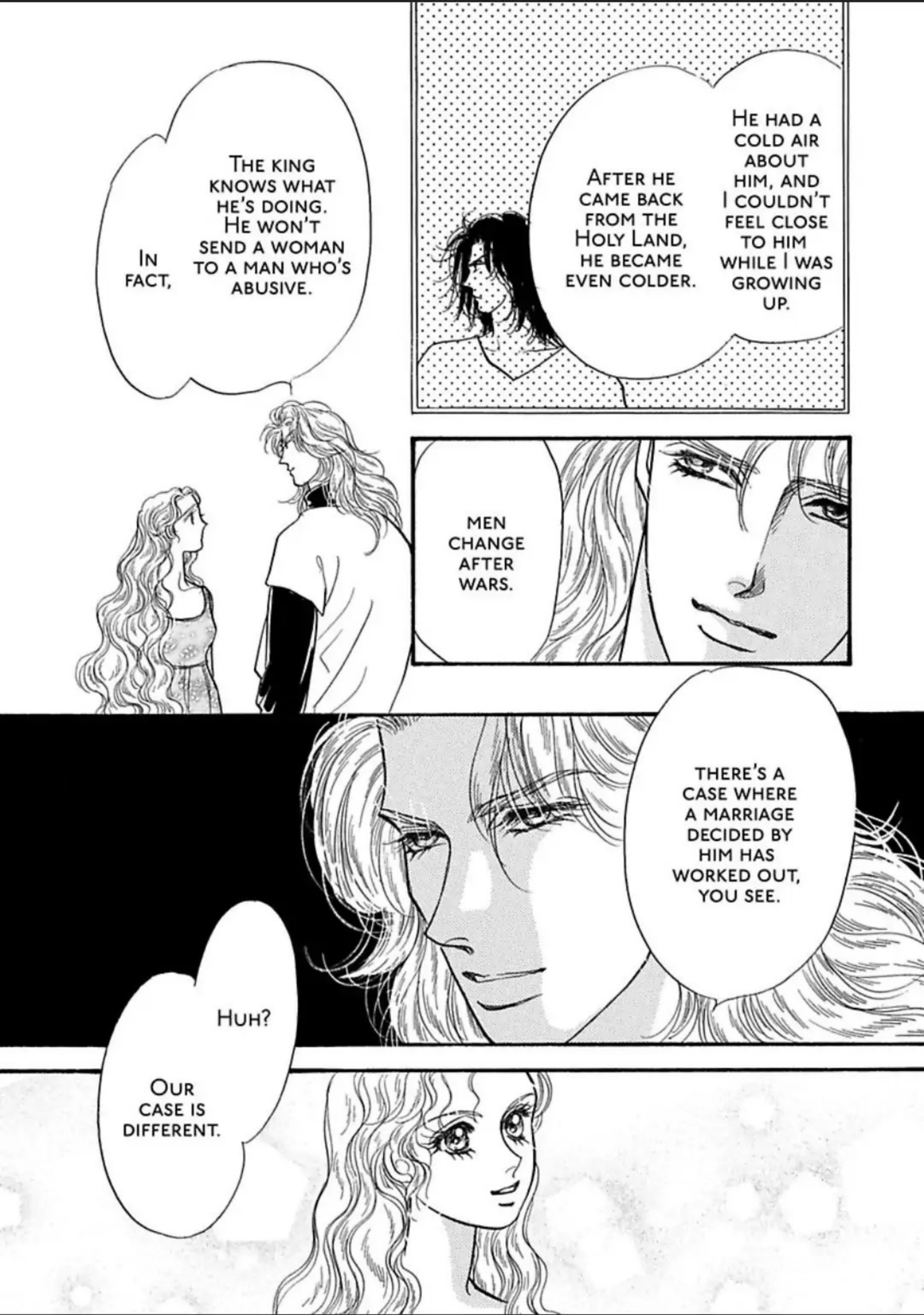

The message reads, "You are to marry Gillian Hexham,
consolidate both of your lands and govern them as one."
He has a niece?
I had no idea he had a niece.
His brother, who'd died a long time ago, had a child.

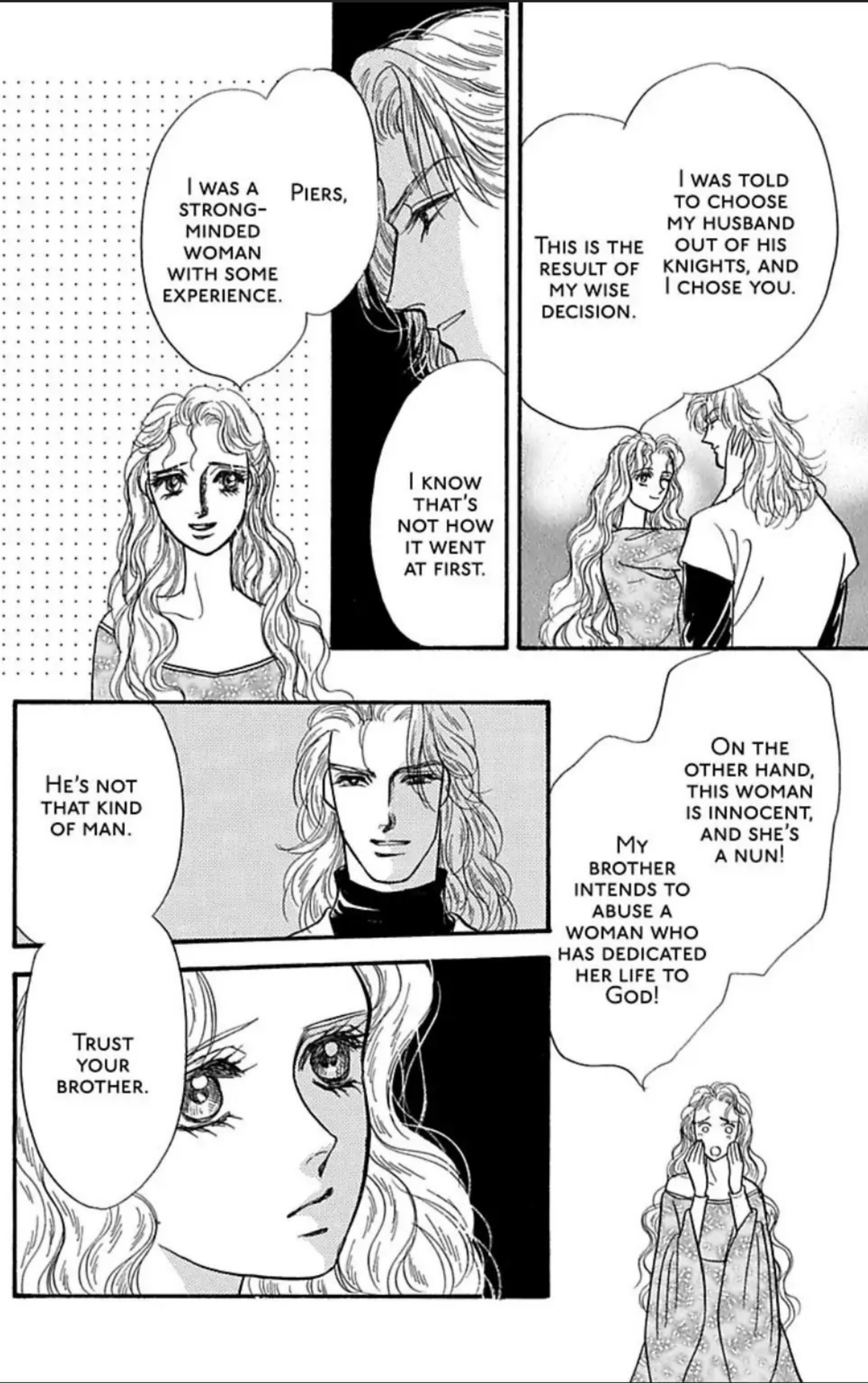

Nicholas!
Don't even think about doing what's in your head!
Do you know what I'm thinking?
I do... I'm your sister, after all.

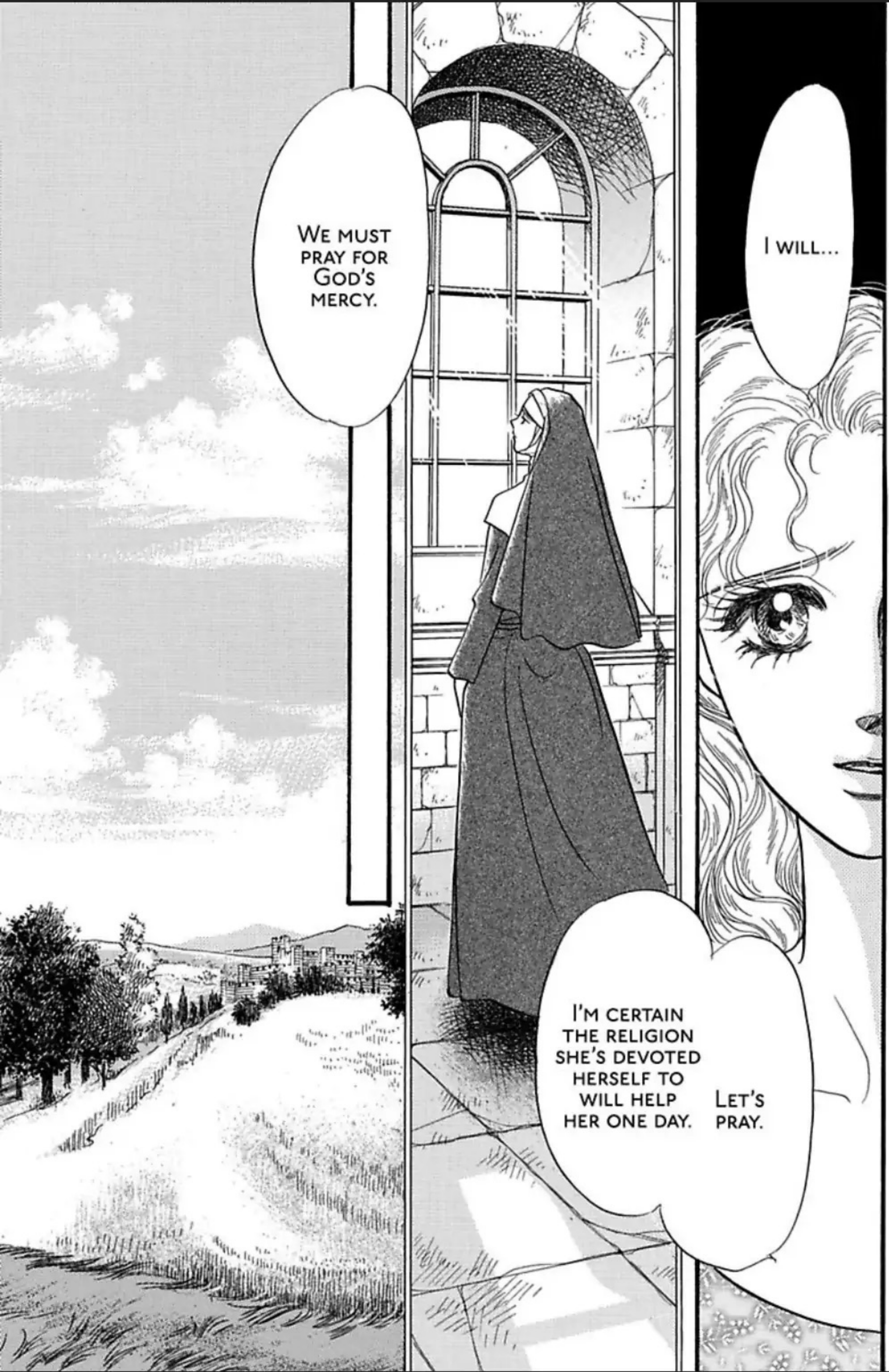

It doesn't matter who's niece she is.
It's not her fault!
Isn't it possible that Hexham abused her in some way?
He was such an awful man that he cruelly treated everyone around him!
Just like his wife, who was confined in a tower for her entire life,
His niece must've suffered the same condition!
If she'd lived in the castle, I'd have met her.
She...
...was living in a convent.

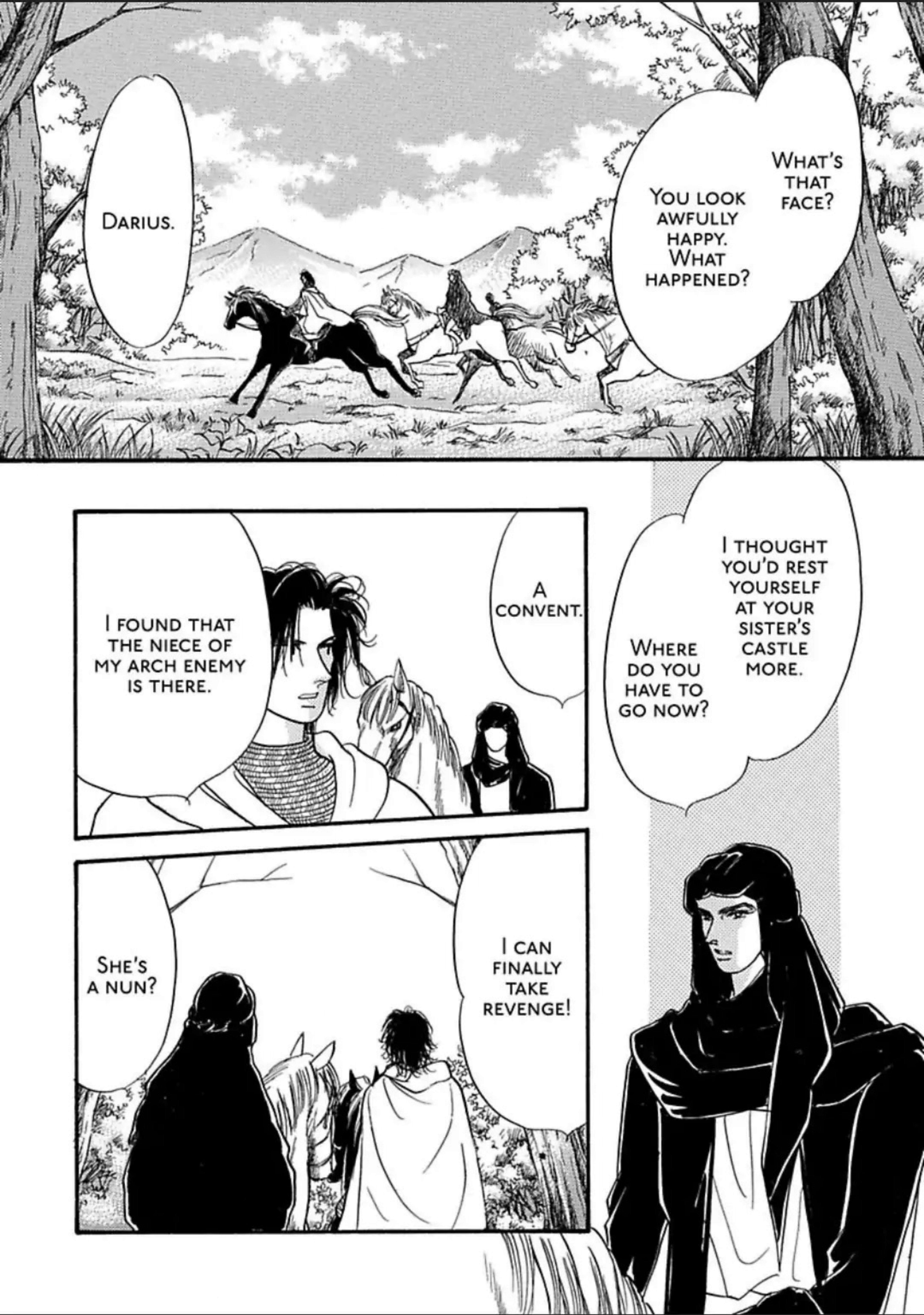

What?
Is she a nun?

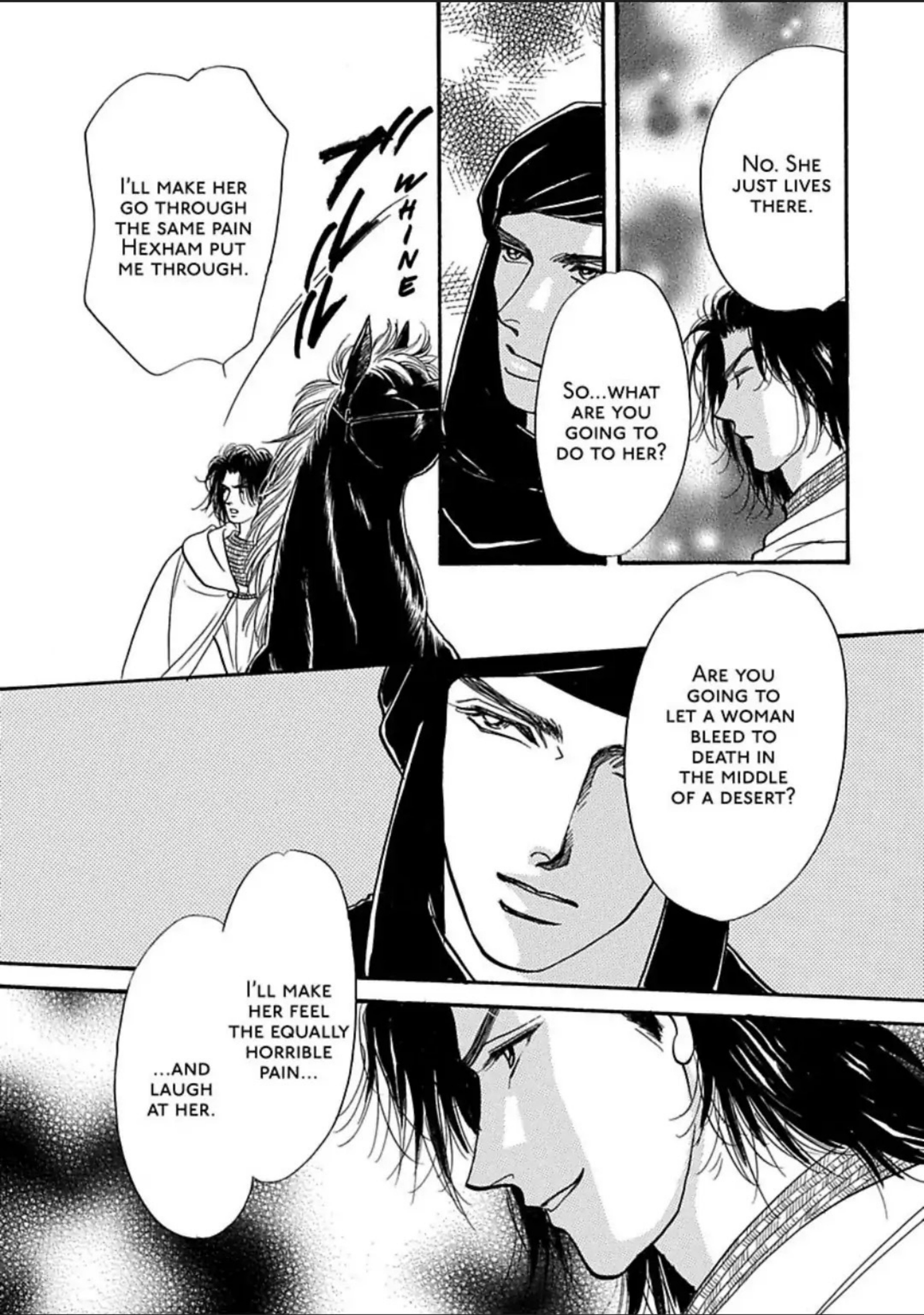

Say, you saw Nicholas's face, too, right?
I'm sure he's going to take advantage of this, as a way of taking revenge.
He's a cruel man, but he's not merciless.
He won't go too far.

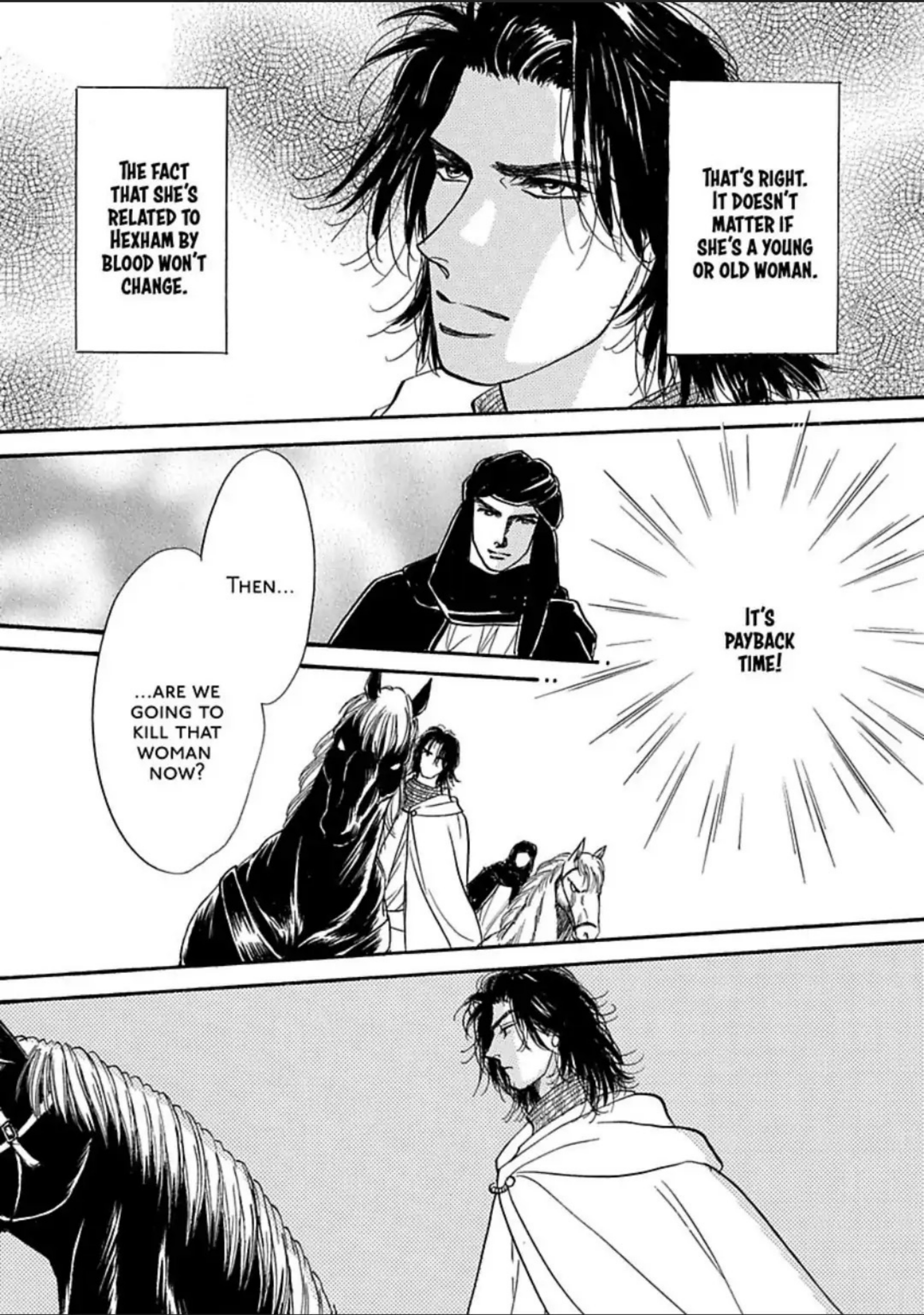

He had a cold air about him, and I couldn't feel close to him while I was growing up.
After he came back from the Holy Land, he became even colder.
In fact, the king knows what he's doing. He won't send a woman to a man who's abusive.
Men change after wars.
There's a case where a marriage decided by him has worked out, you see.
Huh?
Our case is different.

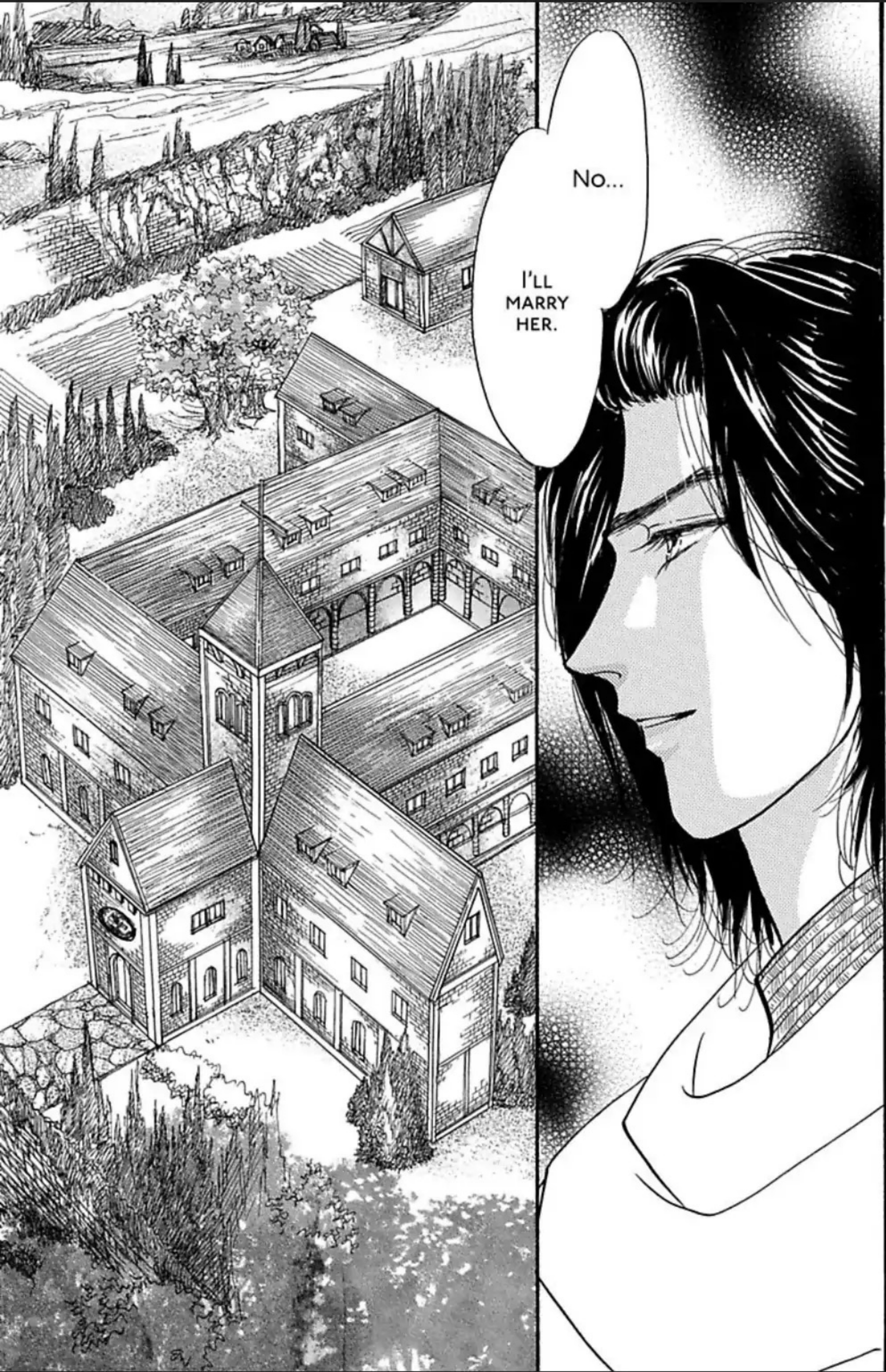

I was told to choose my husband out of his knights, and I chose you.
This is the result of my wise decision.
I know that's not how it went at first.
Piers,
I was a strong-minded woman with some experience.
On the other hand, this woman is innocent, and she's a nun!
My brother intends to abuse a woman who has dedicated her life to God!
He's not that kind of man.
Trust your brother.

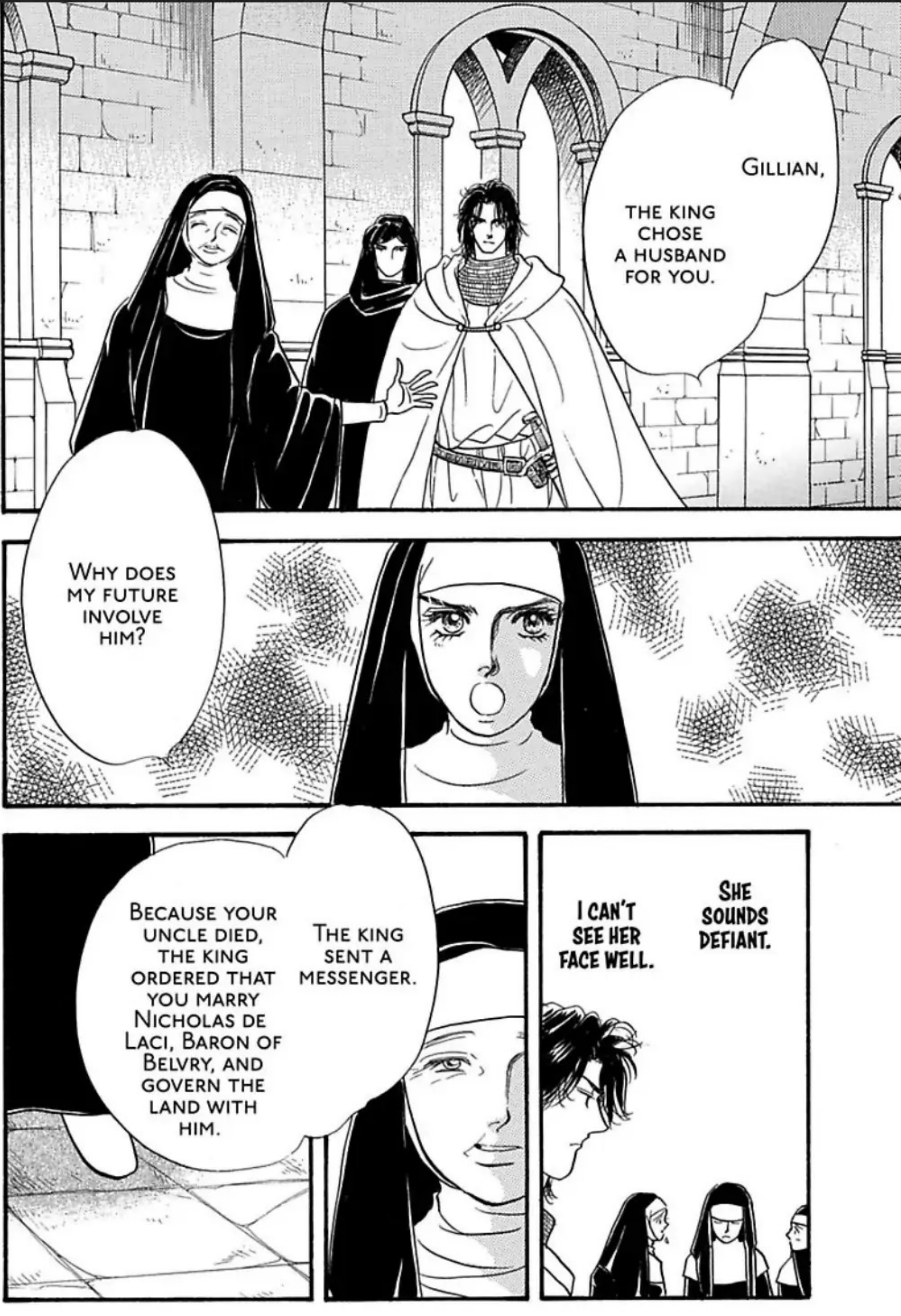

I will...
We must pray for God's mercy.
I'm certain the religion she's devoted herself to will help her one day.
Let's pray.

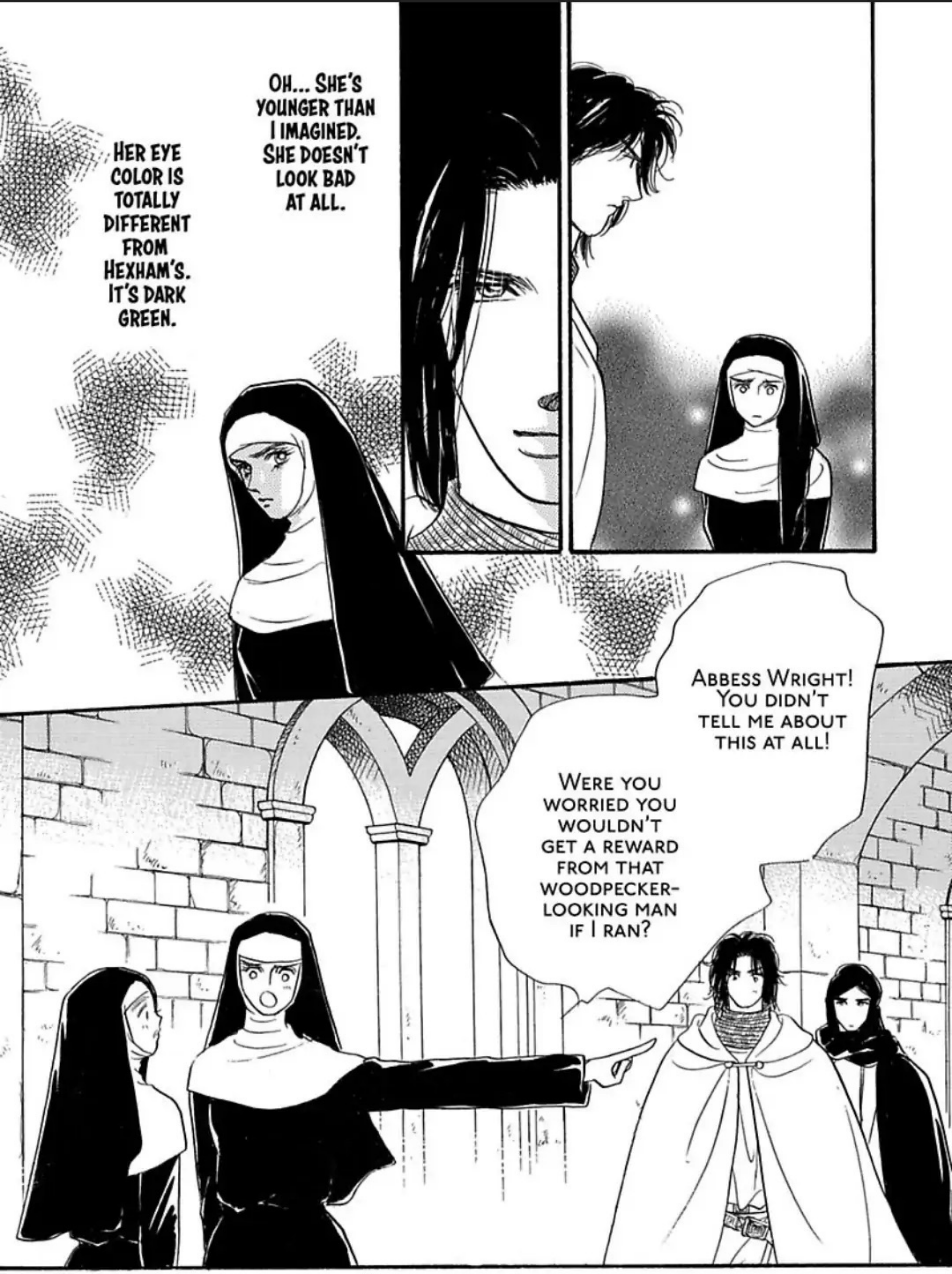

What's that face?
You look awfully happy. What happened?
Darius.
I thought you'd rest yourself at your sister's castle more.
Where do you have to go now?
A convent.
I found that the niece of my arch enemy is there.
I can finally take revenge!
She's a nun?

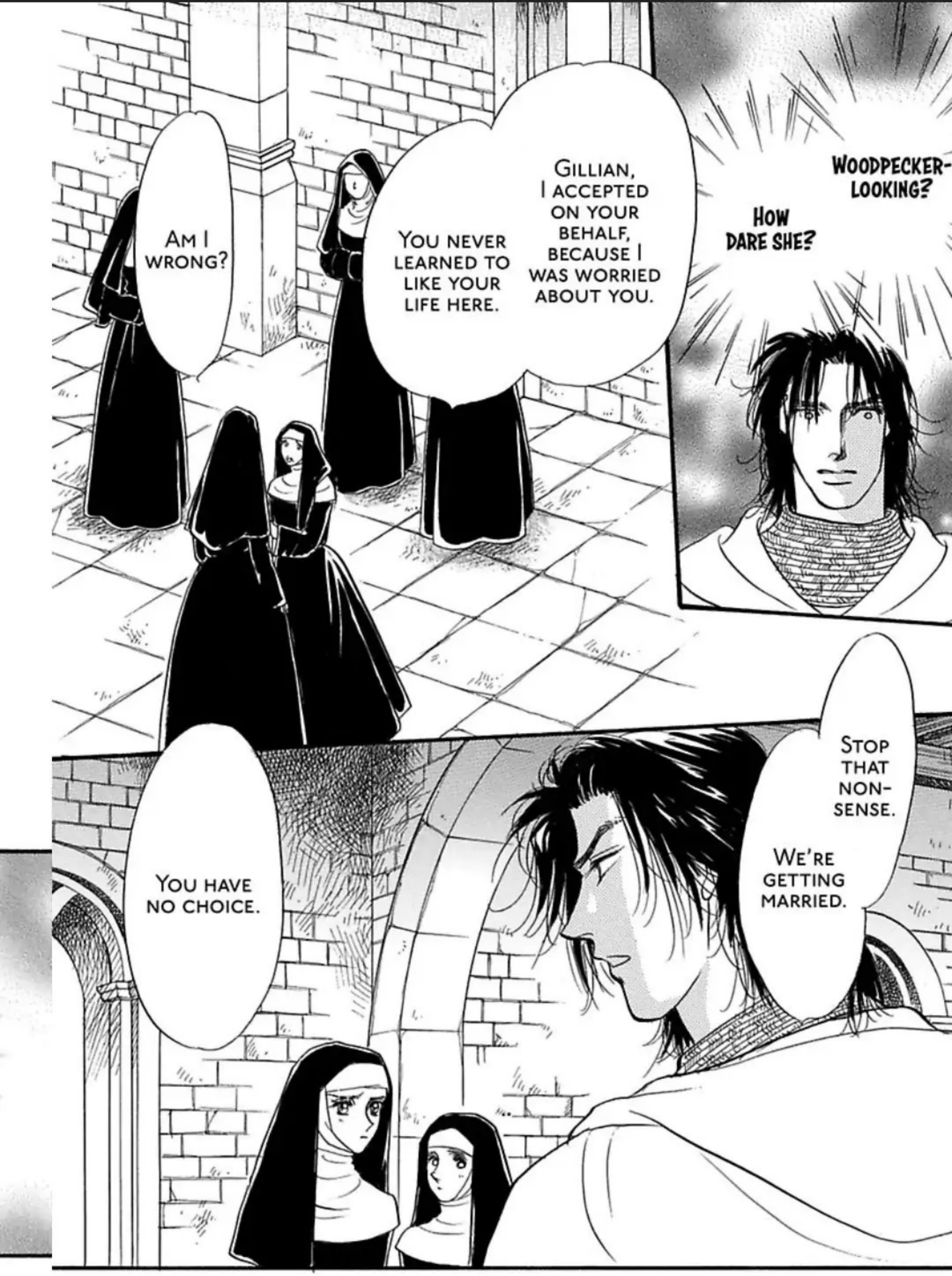

No. She just lives there.
So...what are you going to do to her?
WHINE
I'll make her go through the same pain Hexham put me through.
Are you going to let a woman bleed to death in the middle of a desert?
I'll make her feel the equally horrible pain...
...and laugh at her.

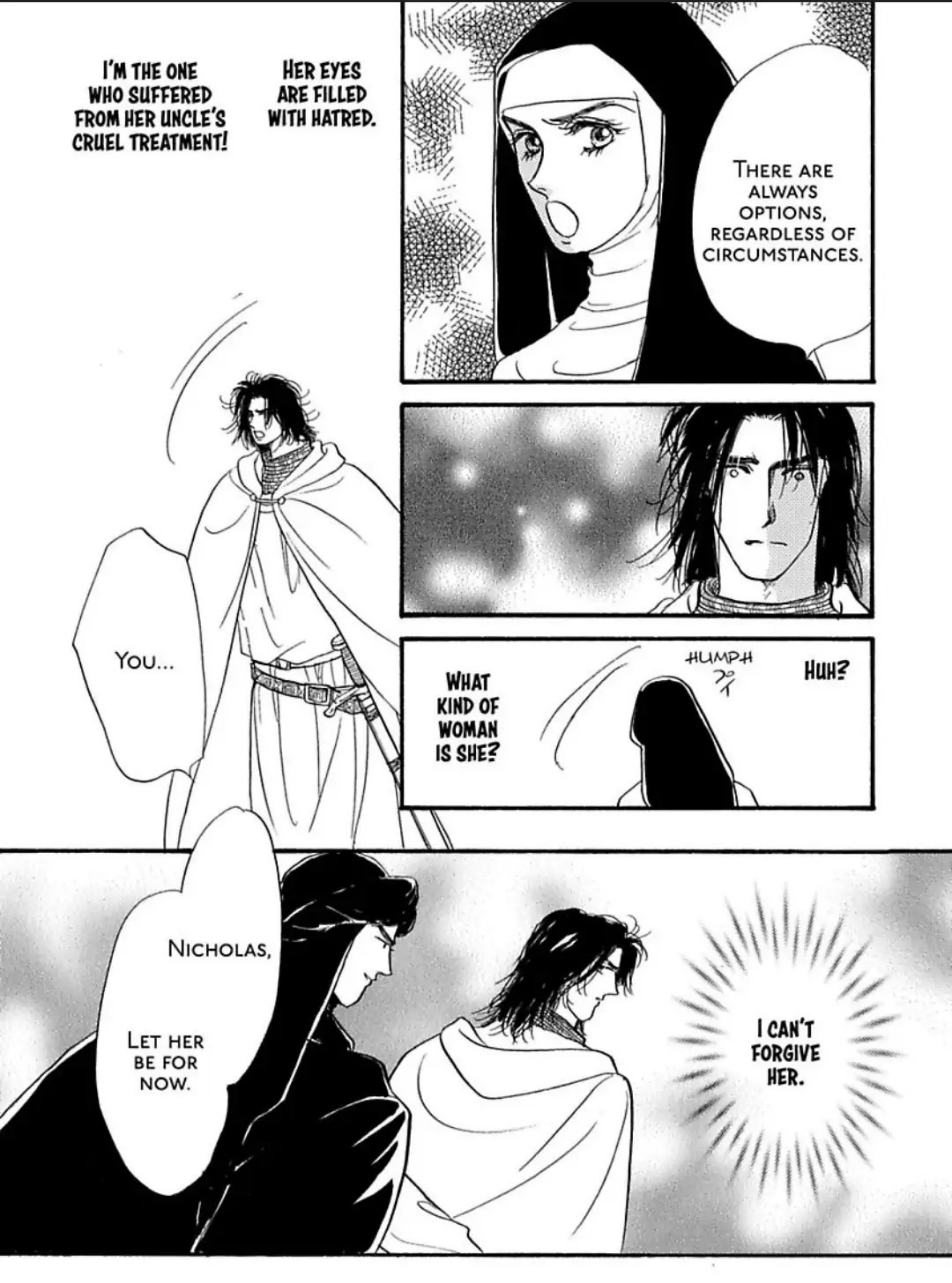

THAT'S RIGHT. IT DOESN'T MATTER IF SHE'S A YOUNG OR OLD WOMAN.
THE FACT THAT SHE'S RELATED TO HEXHAM BY BLOOD WON'T CHANGE.
THEN... ...ARE WE GOING TO KILL THAT WOMAN NOW?
IT'S PAYBACK TIME!

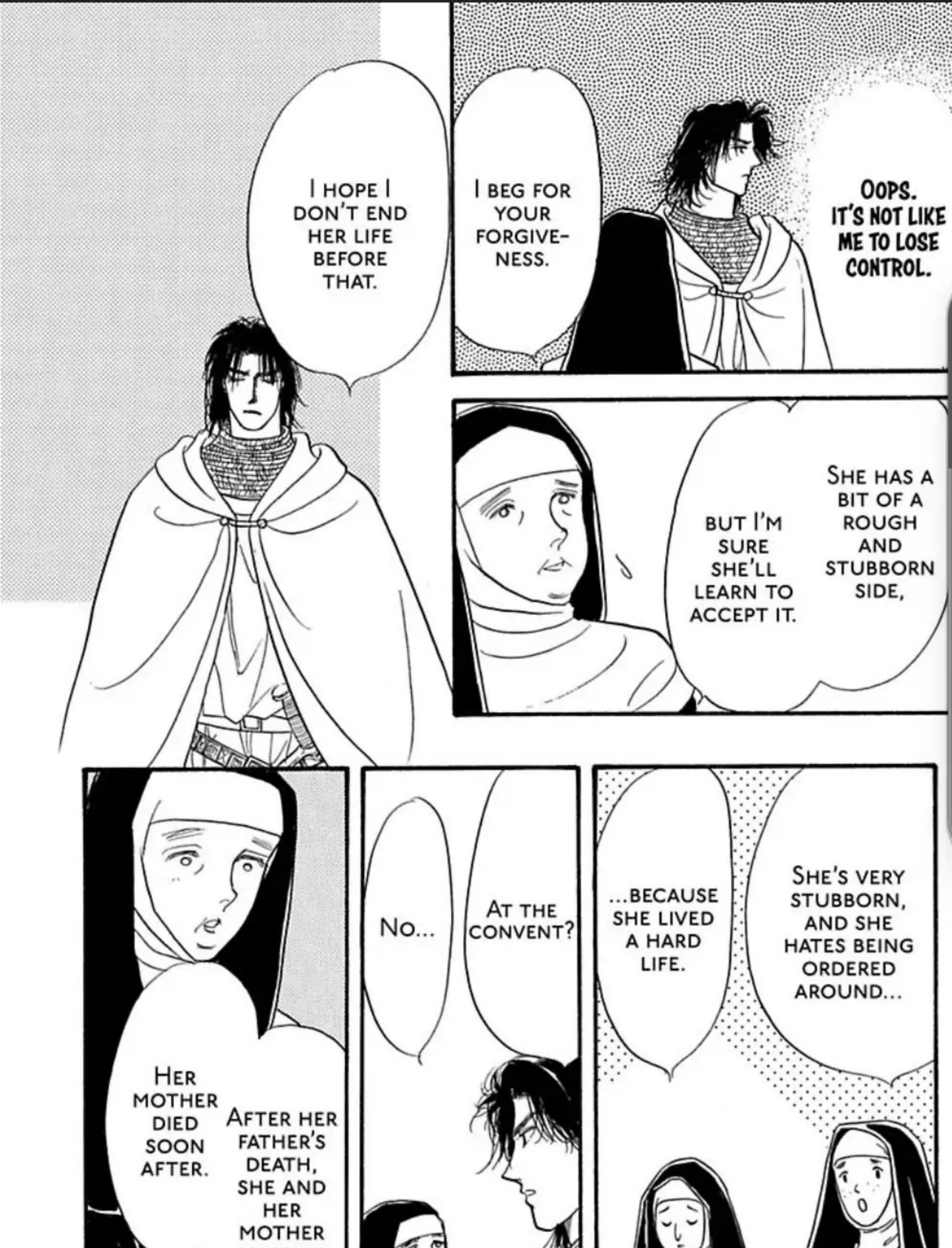

No...
I'll marry her.

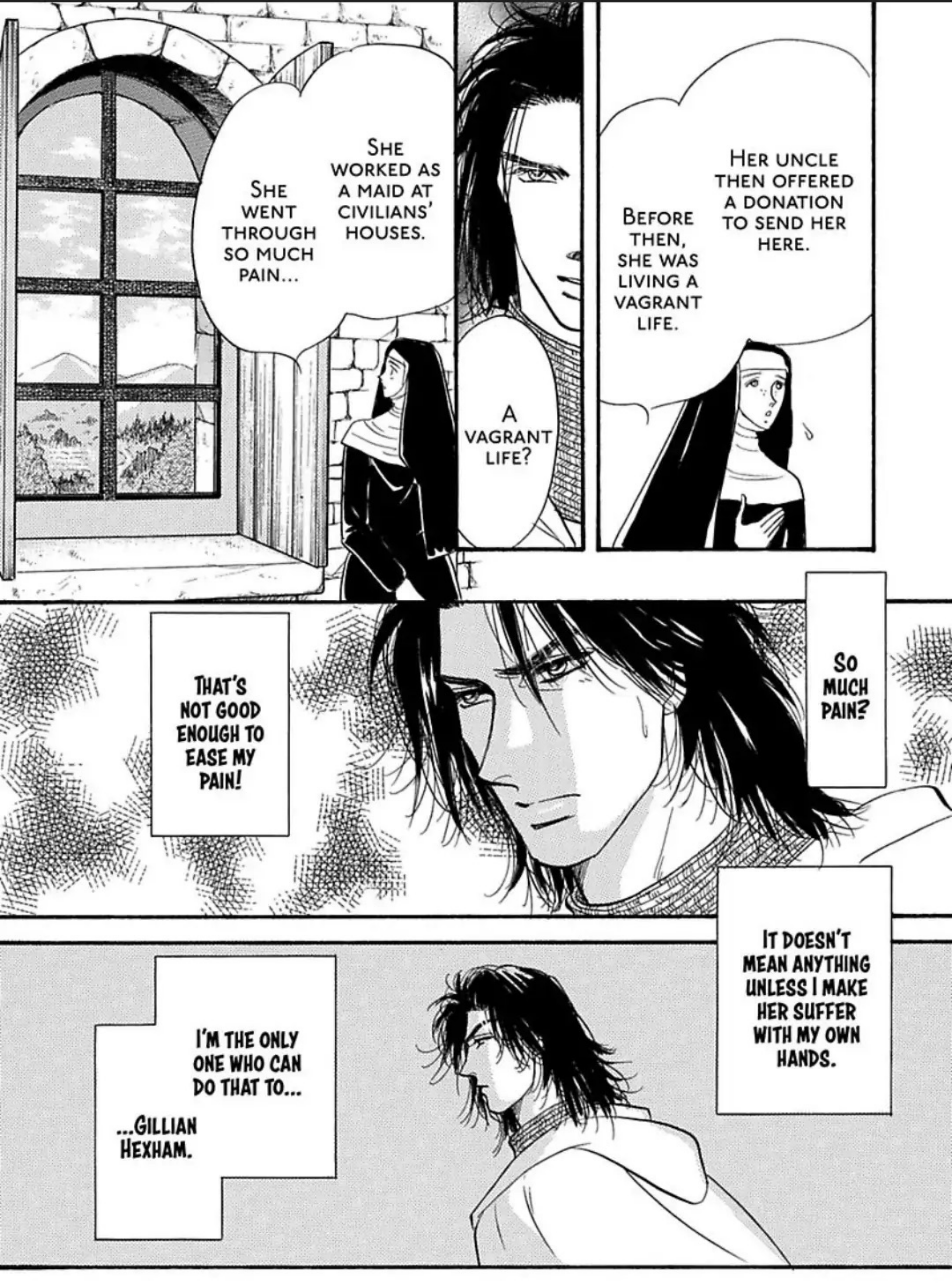

Gillian,
The king chose a husband for you.
Why does my future involve him?
She sounds defiant.
I can't see her face well.
The king sent a messenger.
Because your uncle died, the king ordered that you marry Nicholas de Laci, Baron of Belvry, and govern the land with him.

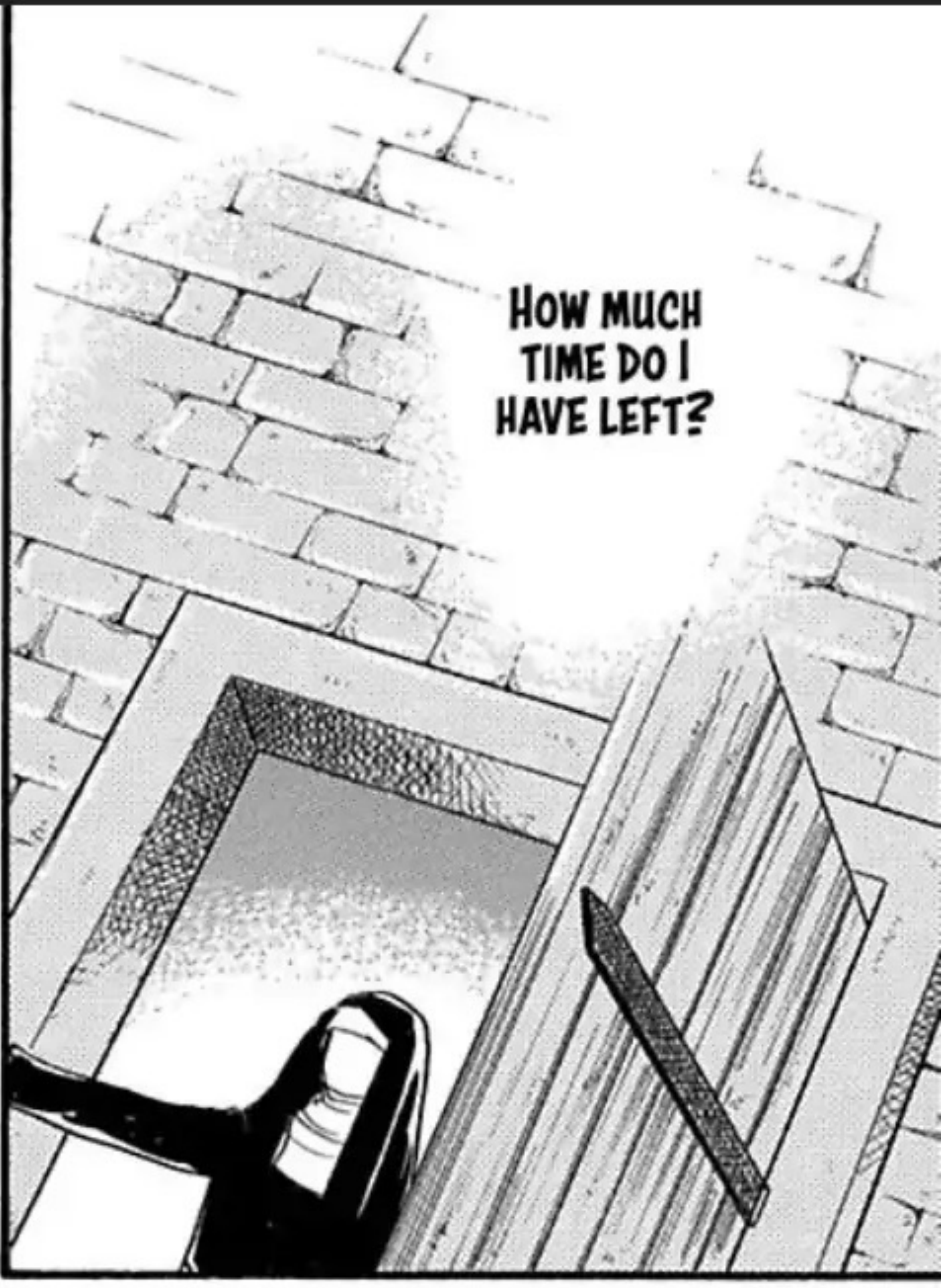

Oh... She's younger than I imagined. She doesn't look bad at all.
Her eye color is totally different from Hexham's. It's dark green.
Abbess Wright! You didn't tell me about this at all!
Were you worried you wouldn't get a reward from that woodpecker-looking man if I ran?

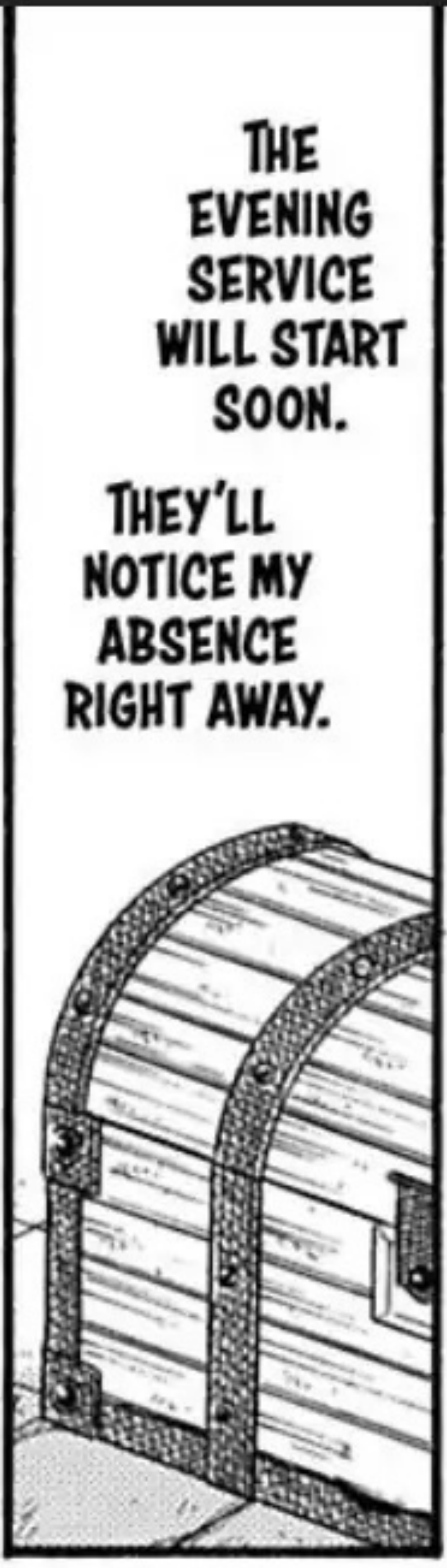

WOODPECKER-LOOKING?
HOW DARE SHE?
GILLIAN, I ACCEPTED ON YOUR BEHALF, BECAUSE I WAS WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
YOU NEVER LEARNED TO LIKE YOUR LIFE HERE.
AM I WRONG?
STOP THAT NON-SENSE.
WE'RE GETTING MARRIED.
YOU HAVE NO CHOICE.

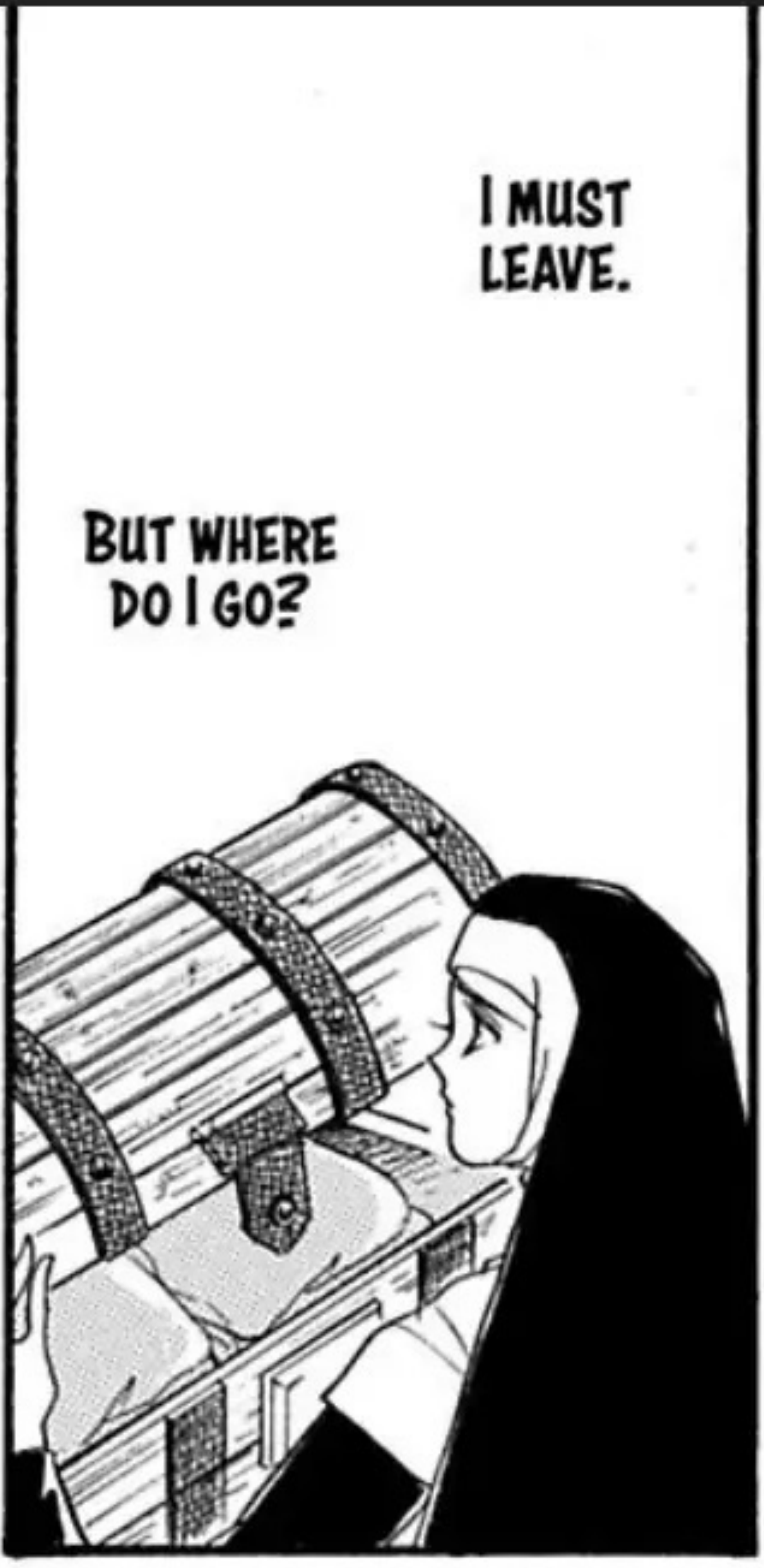

There are always options, regardless of circumstances.
Her eyes are filled with hatred.
I'm the one who suffered from her uncle's cruel treatment!
Huh?
HUMPH
プイ
What kind of woman is she?
You...
I can't forgive her.
Nicholas,
Let her be for now.

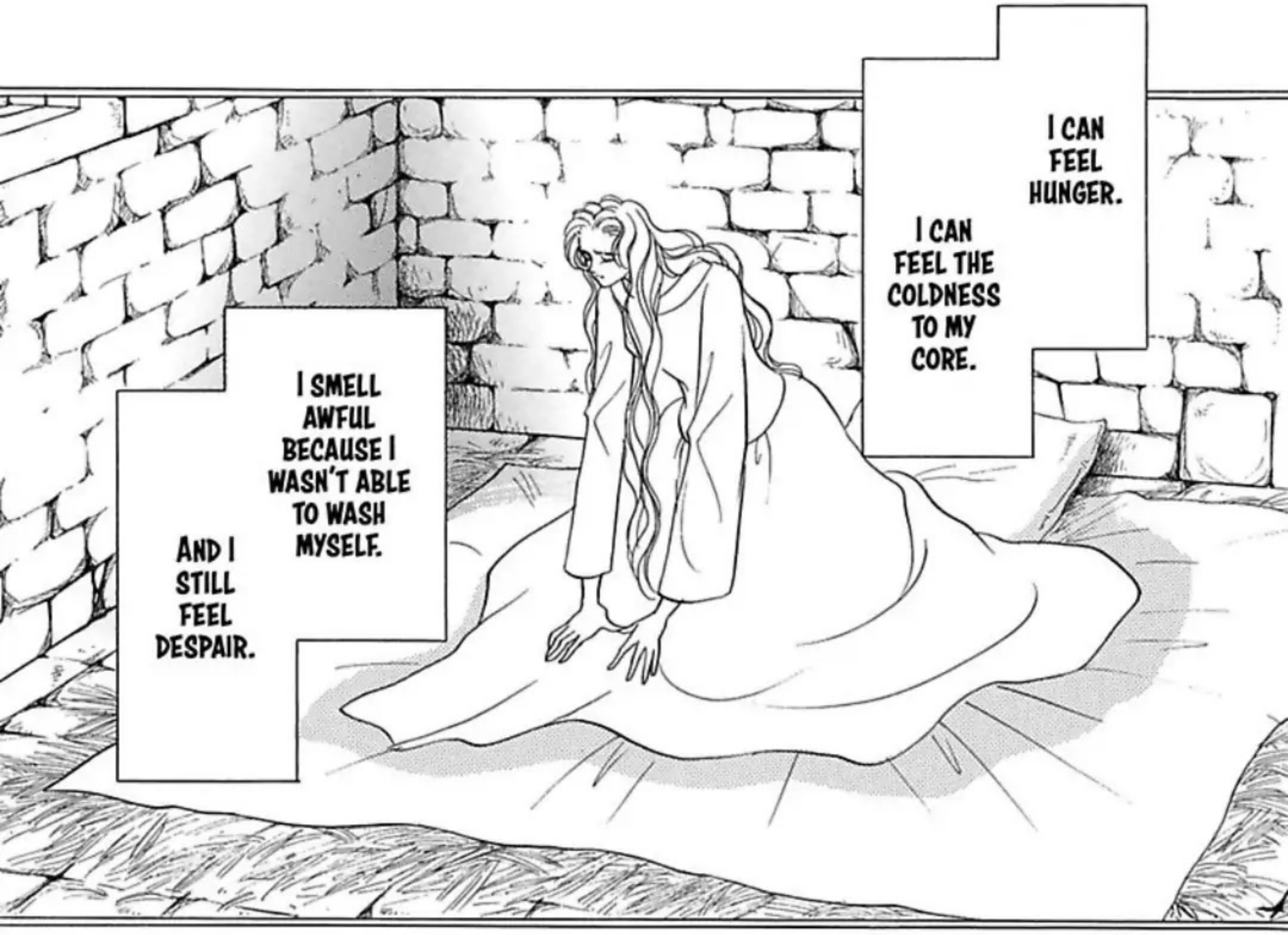

Oops. It's not like me to lose control.
I beg for your forgiveness.
I hope I don't end her life before that.
She has a bit of a rough and stubborn side,
But I'm sure she'll learn to accept it.
She's very stubborn, and she hates being ordered around...
...because she lived a hard life.
At the convent?
No...
After her father's death, she and her mother lived in poverty.
Her mother died soon after.

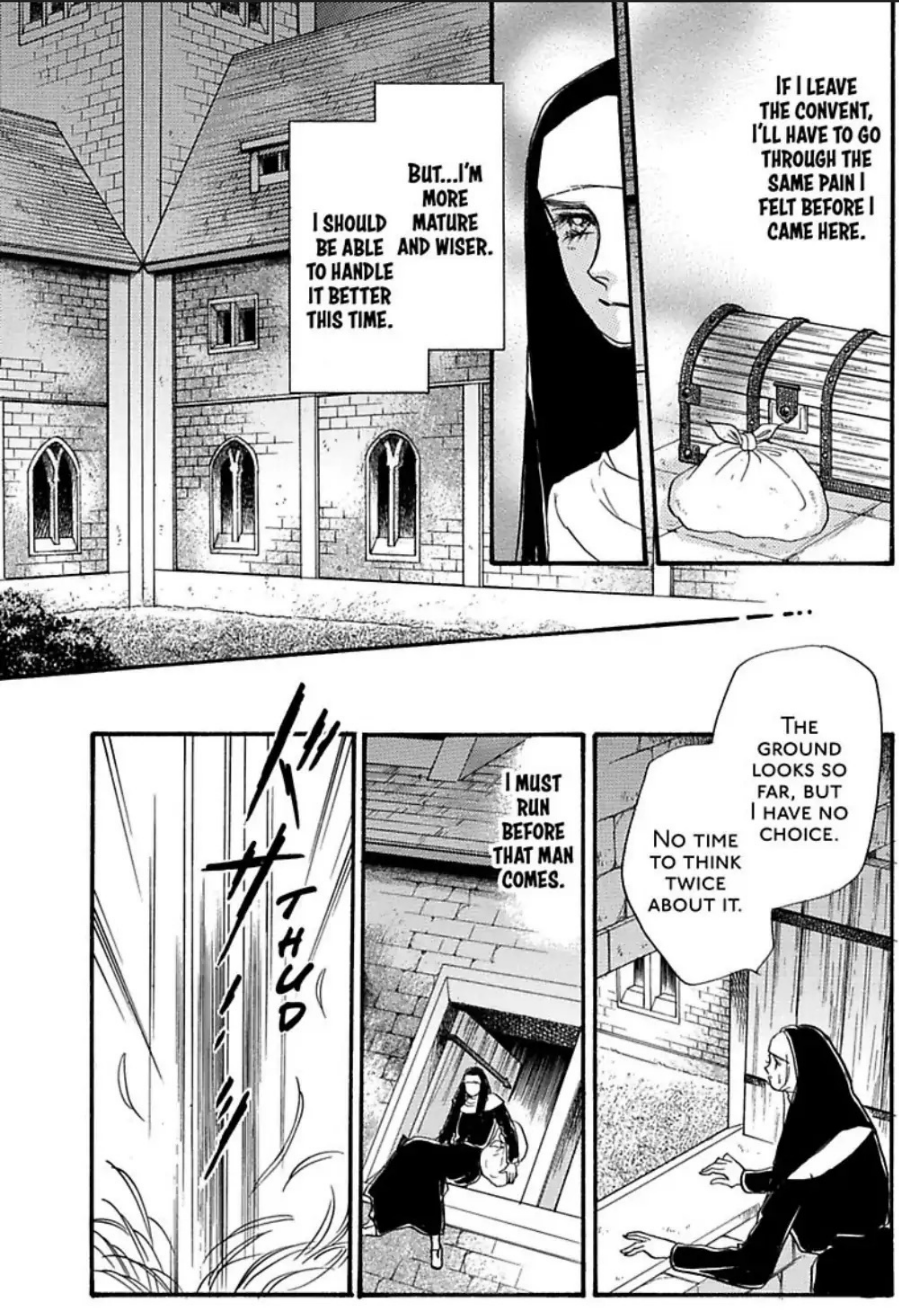

Her uncle then offered a donation to send her here.
Before then, she was living a vagrant life.
A vagrant life?
She worked as a maid at civilians' houses.
She went through so much pain...
So much pain?
That's not good enough to ease my pain!
It doesn't mean anything unless I make her suffer with my own hands.
I'm the only one who can do that to...
...Gillian Hexham.

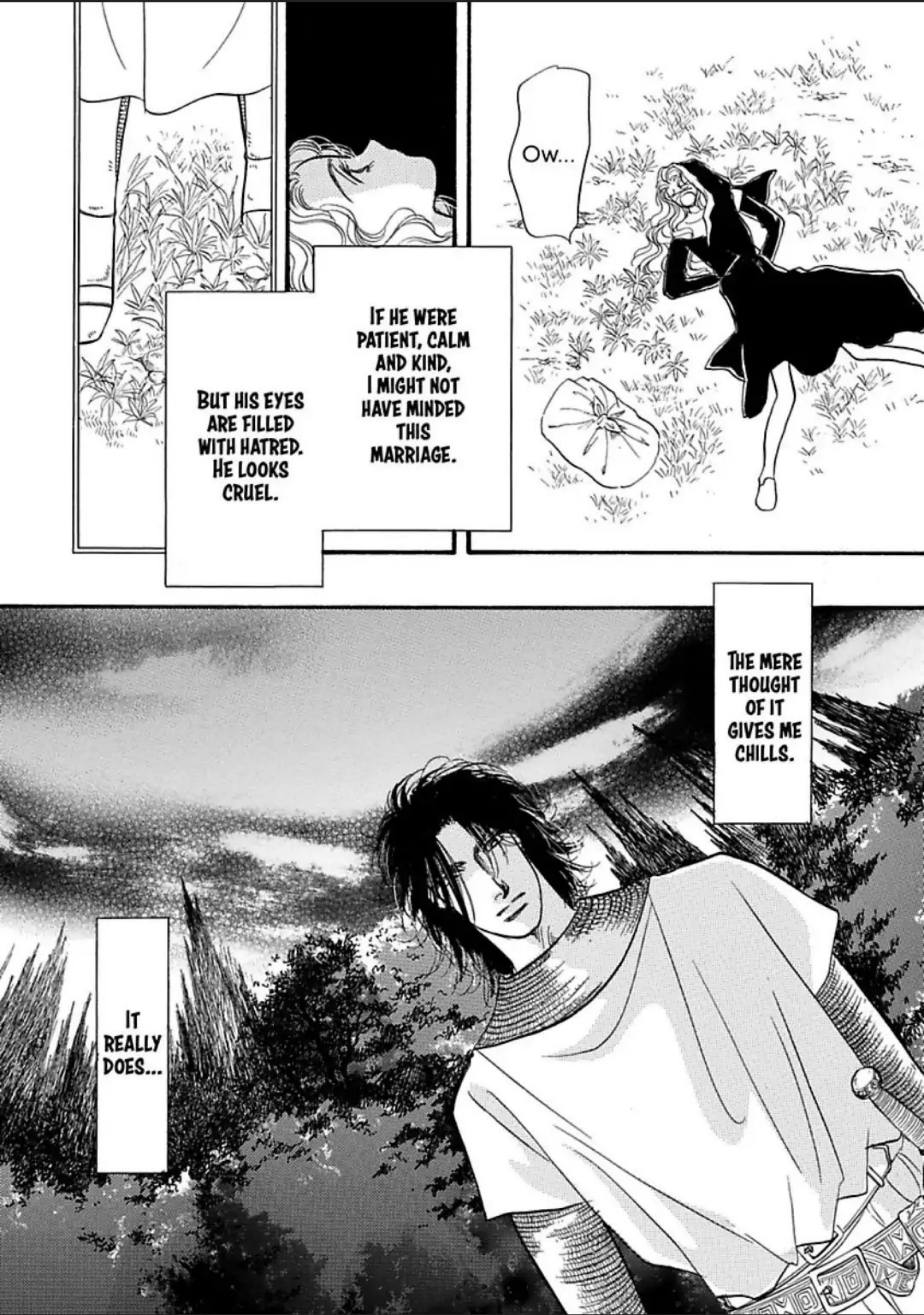

HOW MUCH TIME DO I HAVE LEFT?

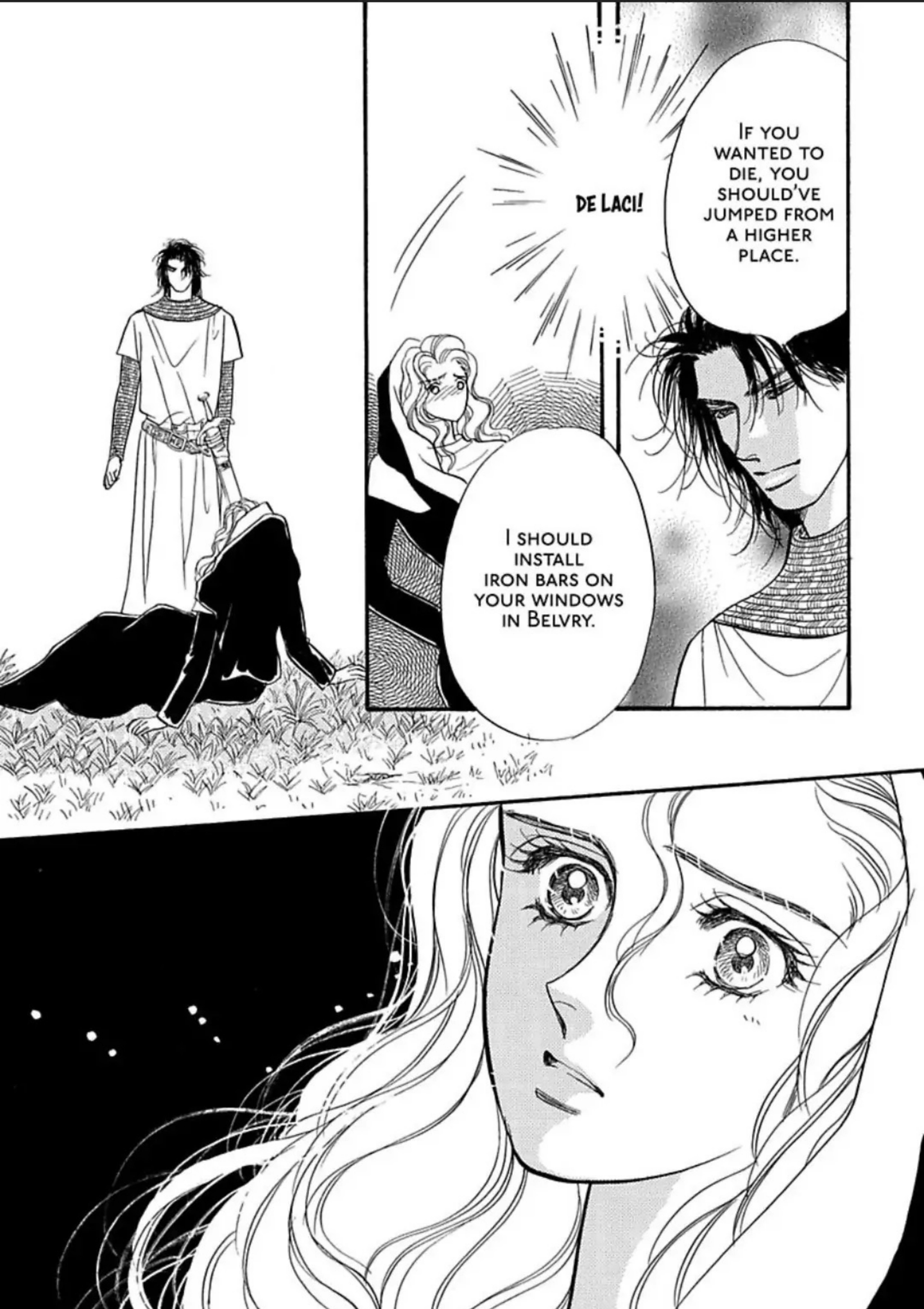

THE EVENING SERVICE WILL START SOON.
THEY'LL NOTICE MY ABSENCE RIGHT AWAY.

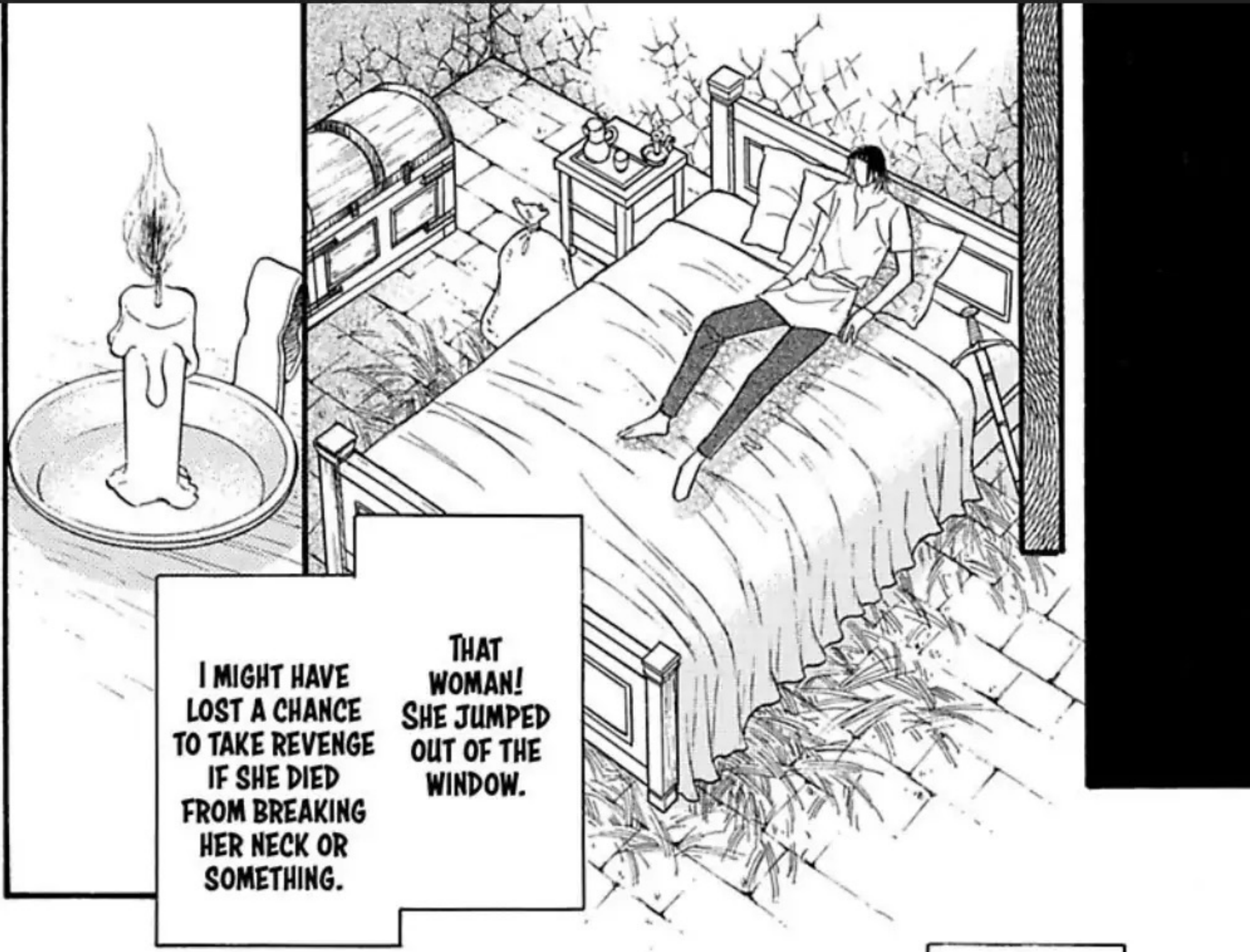

I MUST LEAVE.
BUT WHERE DO I GO?

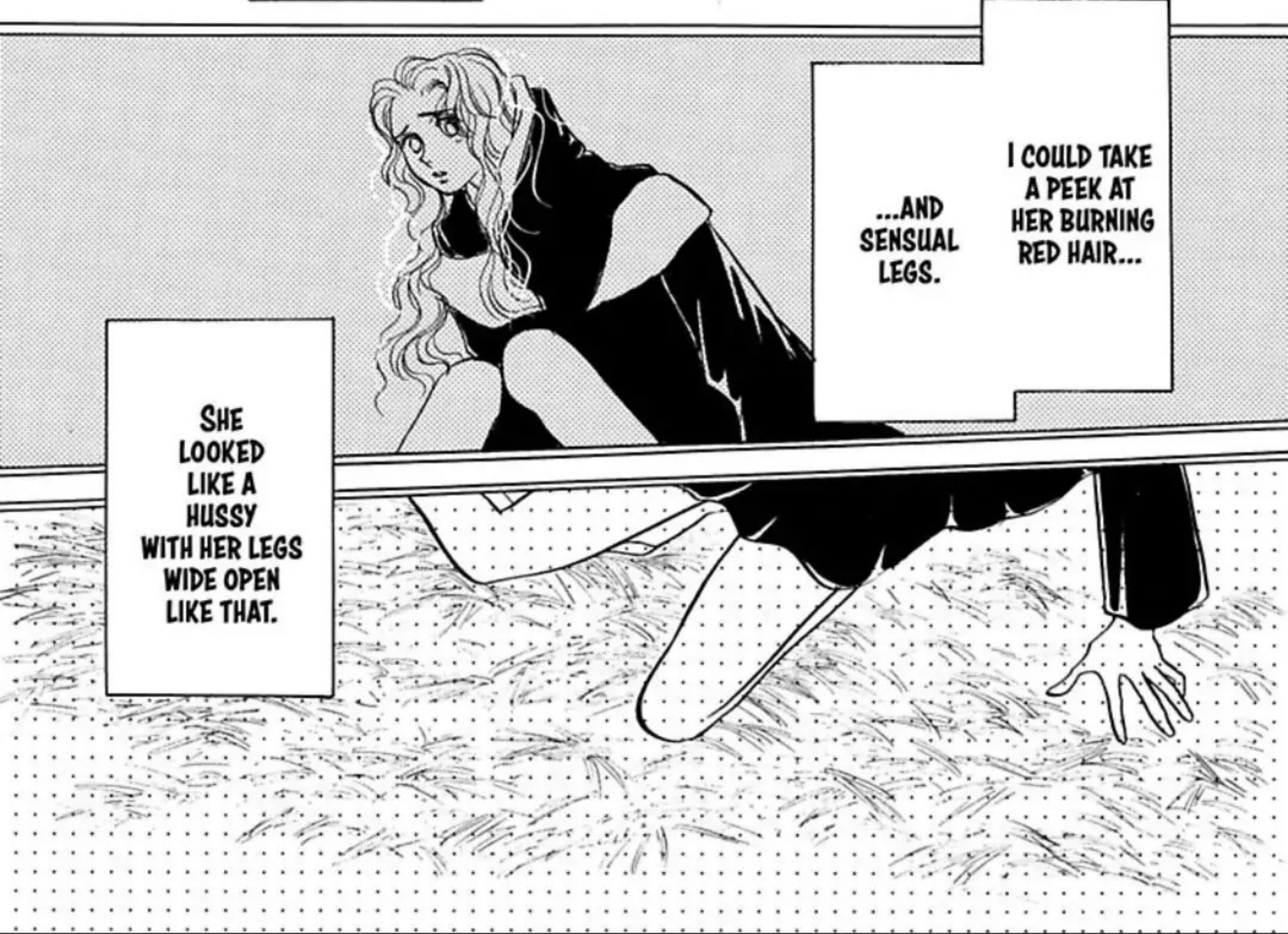

I CAN FEEL HUNGER.
I CAN FEEL THE COLDNESS TO MY CORE.
I SMELL AWFUL BECAUSE I WASN'T ABLE TO WASH MYSELF.
AND I STILL FEEL DESPAIR.

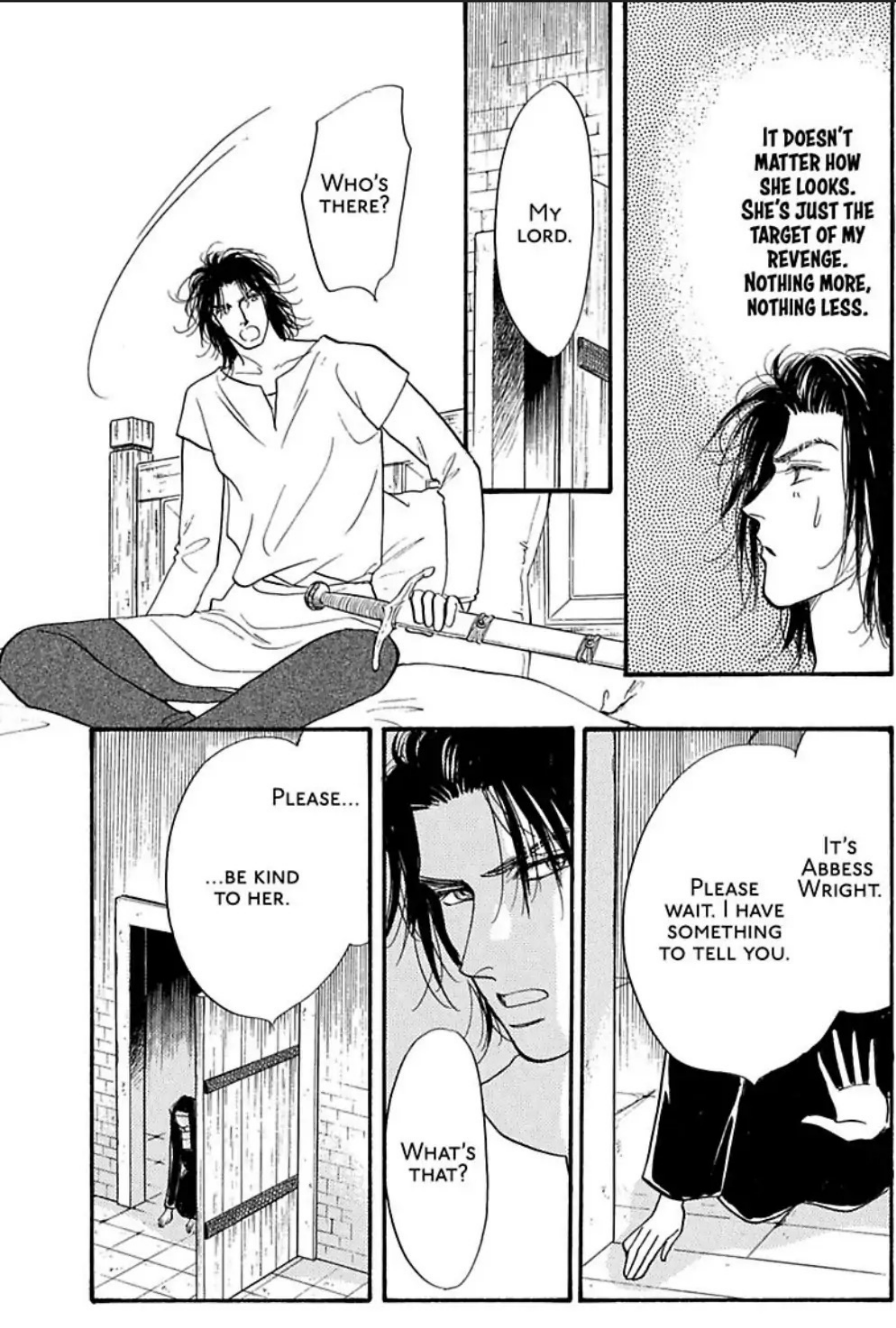

IF I LEAVE THE CONVENT, I'LL HAVE TO GO THROUGH THE SAME PAIN I FELT BEFORE I CAME HERE.
BUT...I'M MORE MATURE AND WISER.
I SHOULD BE ABLE TO HANDLE IT BETTER THIS TIME.
The ground looks so far, but I have no choice.
No time to think twice about it.
I MUST RUN BEFORE THAT MAN COMES.
THUD

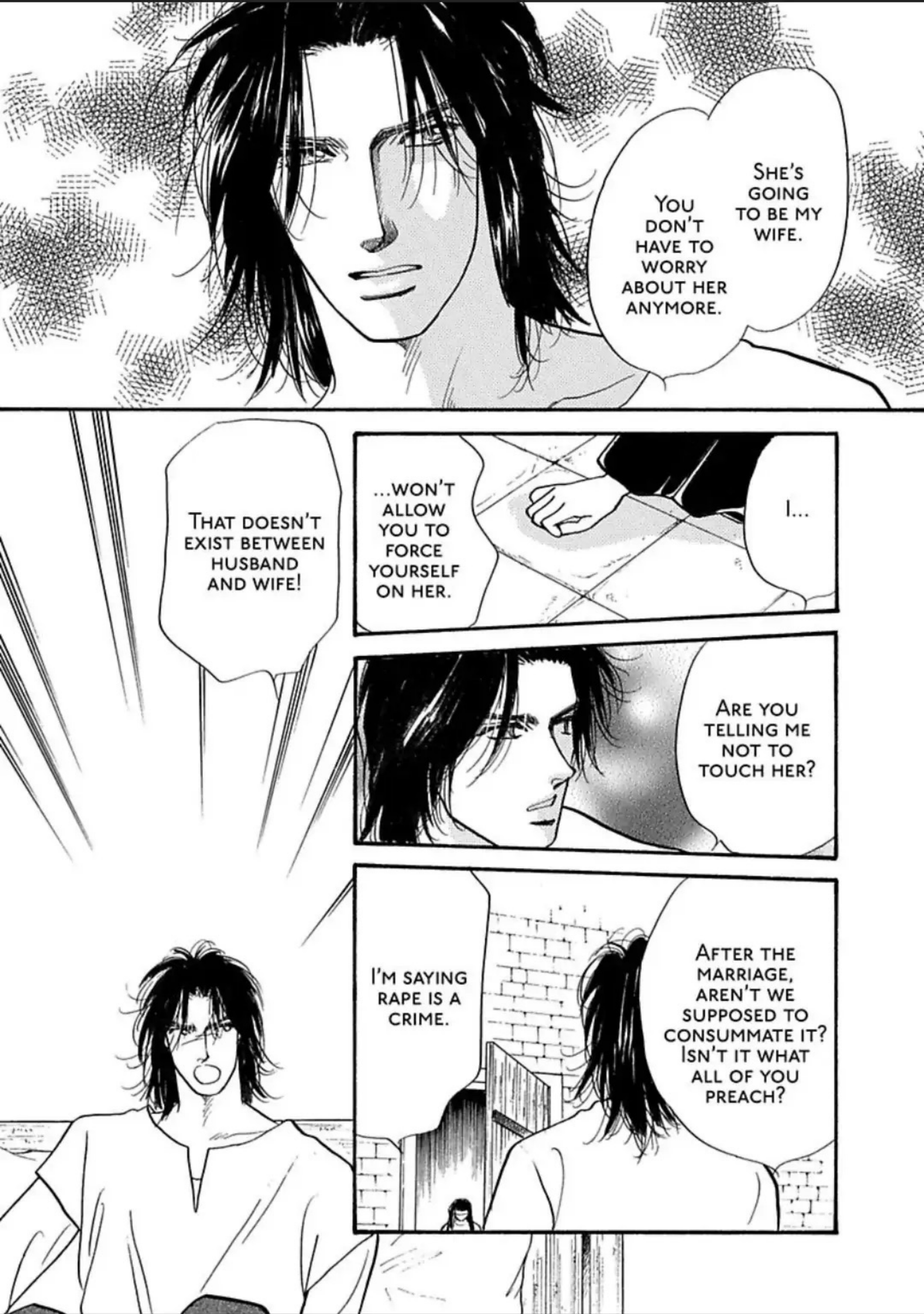

Ow...
If he were patient, calm and kind, I might not have minded this marriage.
But his eyes are filled with hatred. He looks cruel.
The mere thought of it gives me chills.
It really does...

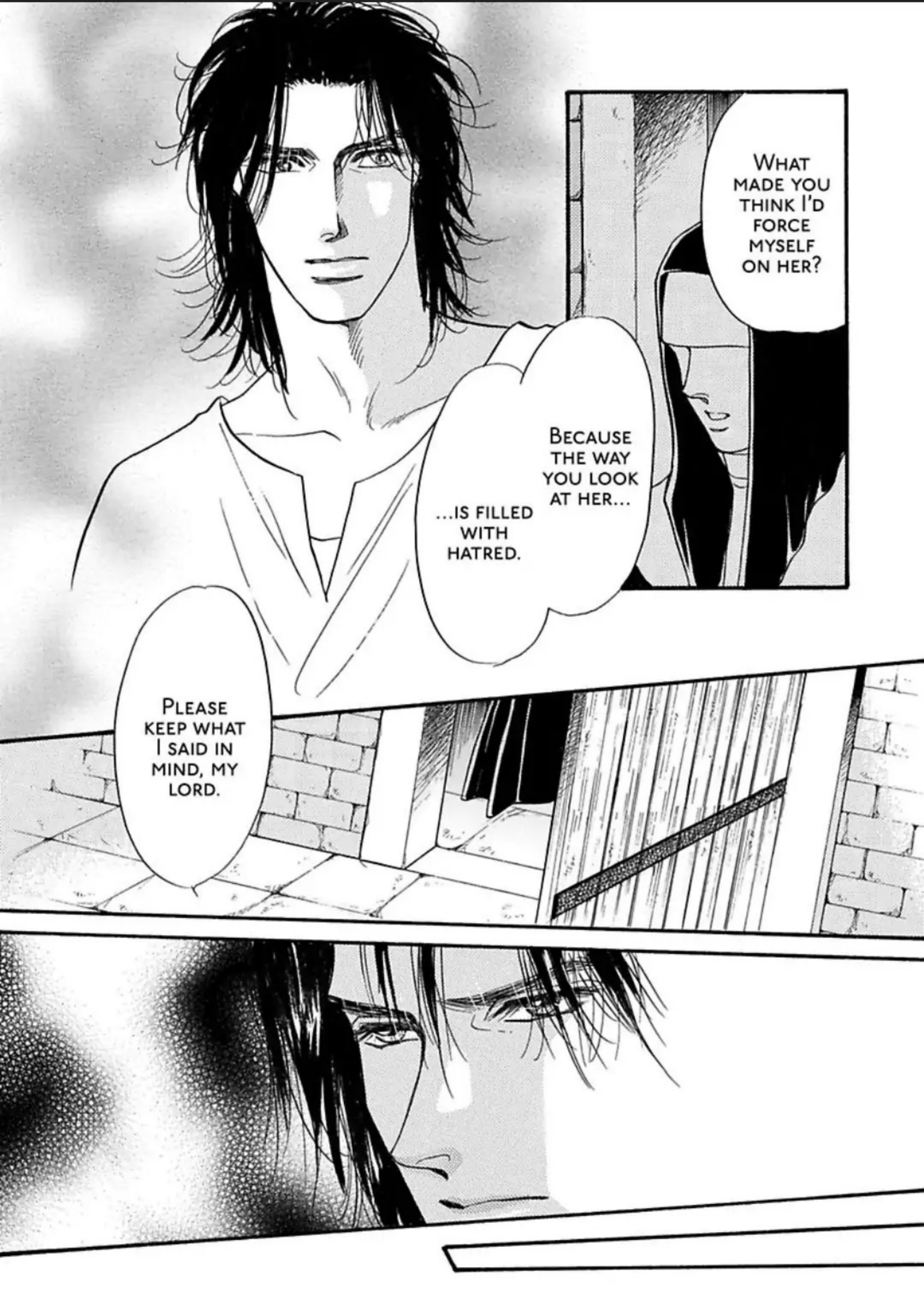

If you wanted to die, you should've jumped from a higher place.
De Laci!
I should install iron bars on your windows in Belvry.

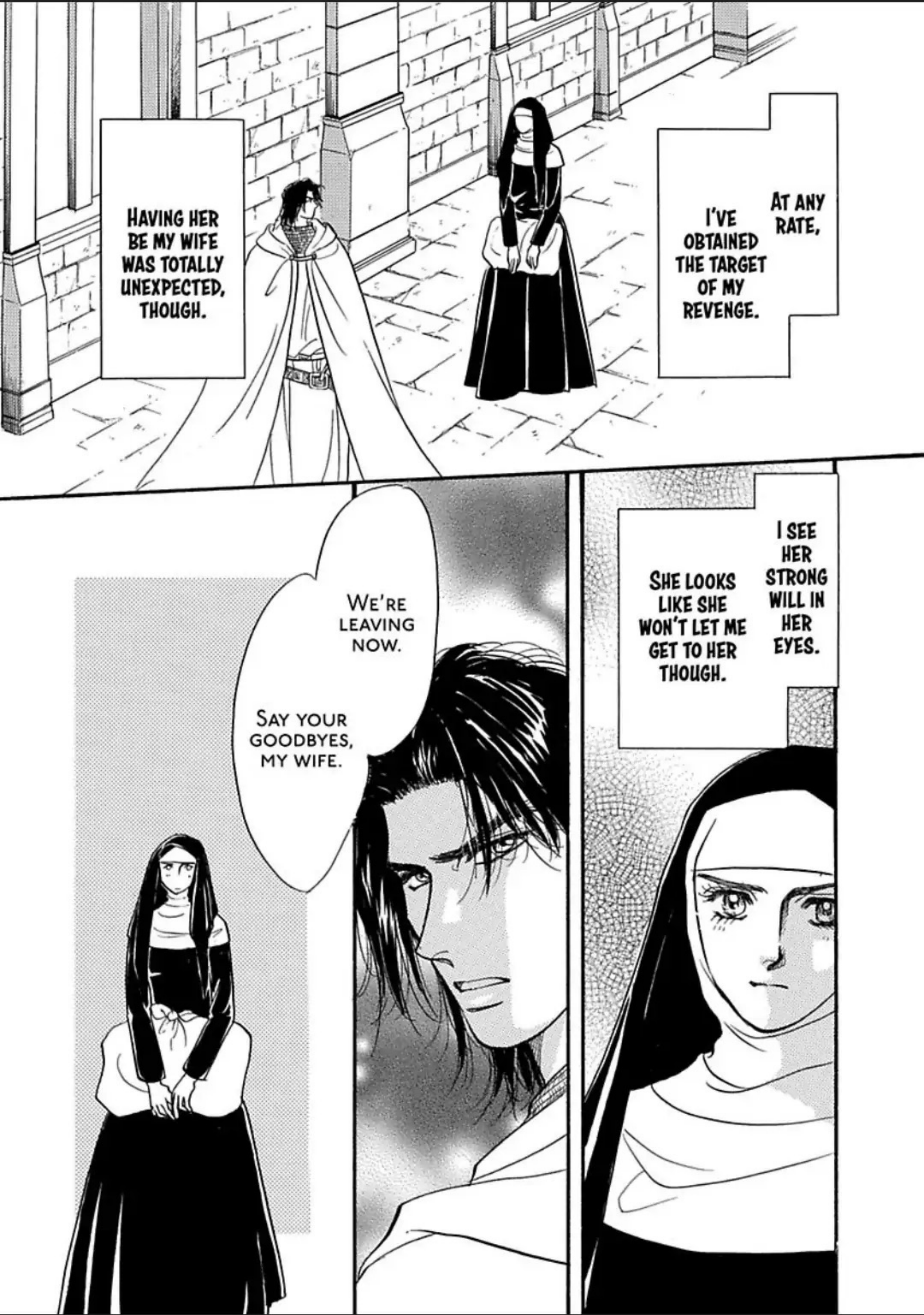

THAT WOMAN! SHE JUMPED OUT OF THE WINDOW.
I MIGHT HAVE LOST A CHANCE TO TAKE REVENGE IF SHE DIED FROM BREAKING HER NECK OR SOMETHING.

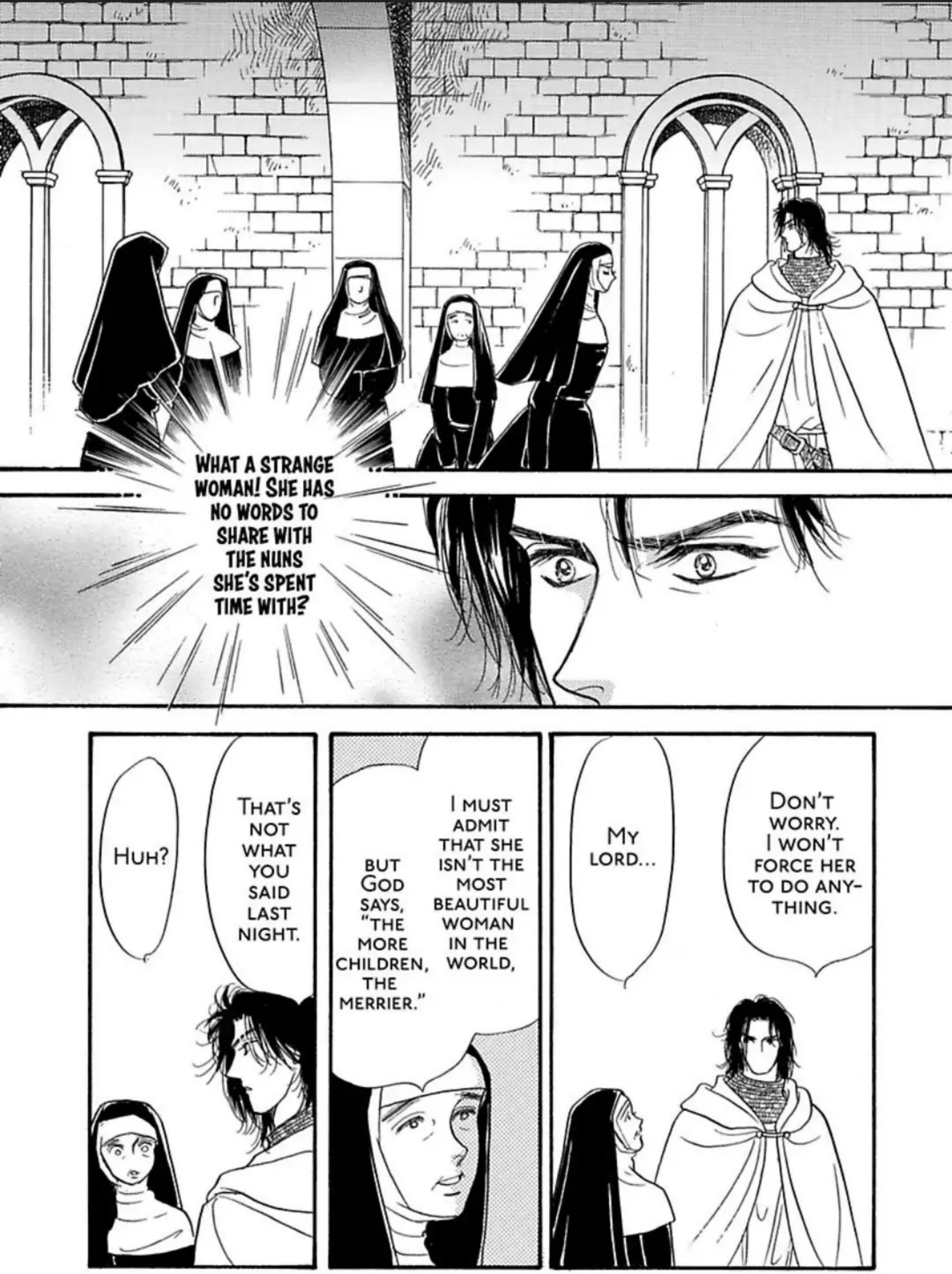

I COULD TAKE A PEEK AT HER BURNING RED HAIR...
...AND SENSUAL LEGS.
SHE LOOKED LIKE A HUSSY WITH HER LEGS WIDE OPEN LIKE THAT.

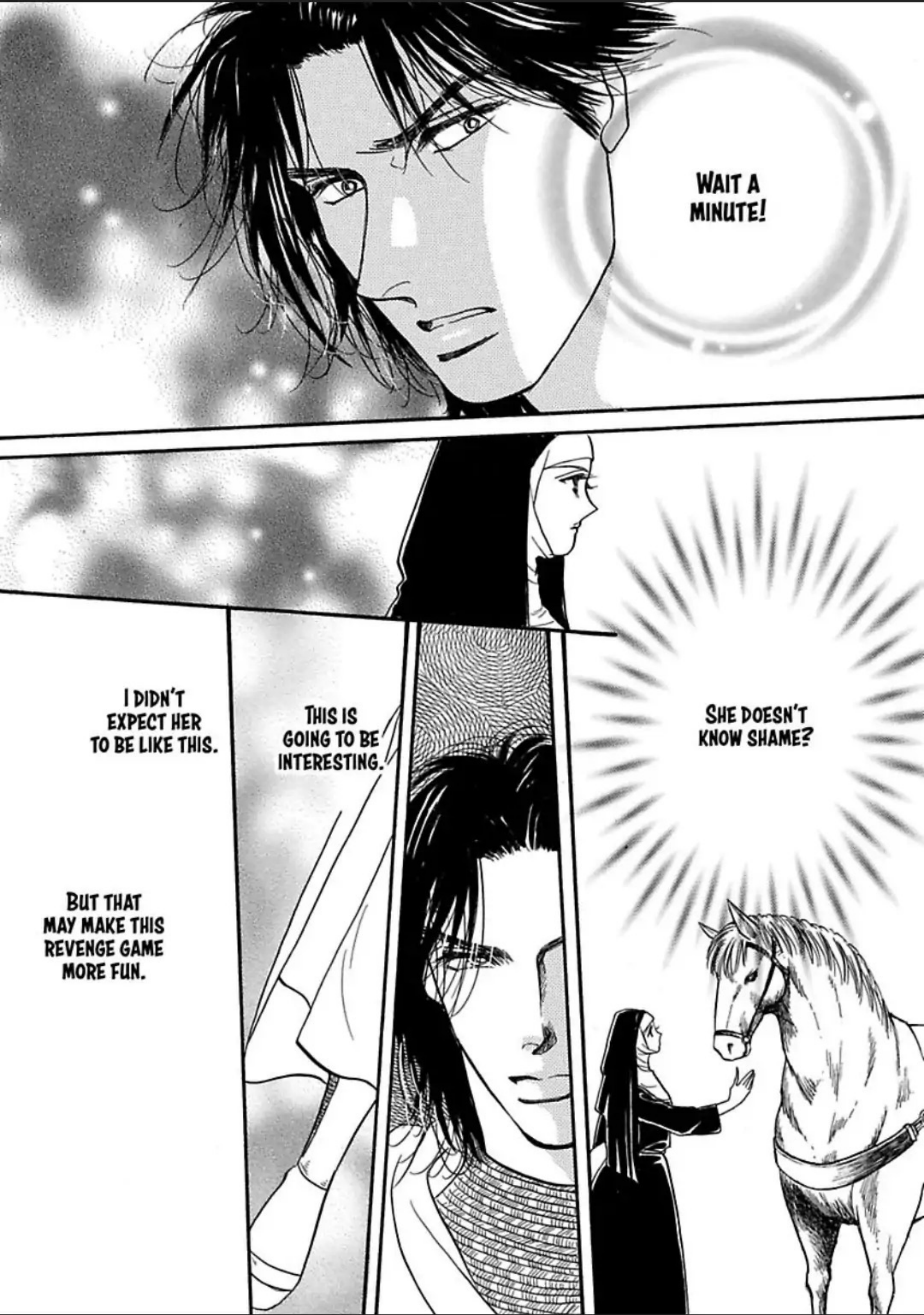

It doesn't matter how she looks. She's just the target of my revenge. Nothing more, nothing less.
My lord.
Who's there?
It's Abbess Wright.
Please wait. I have something to tell you.
What's that?
Please...
...be kind to her.

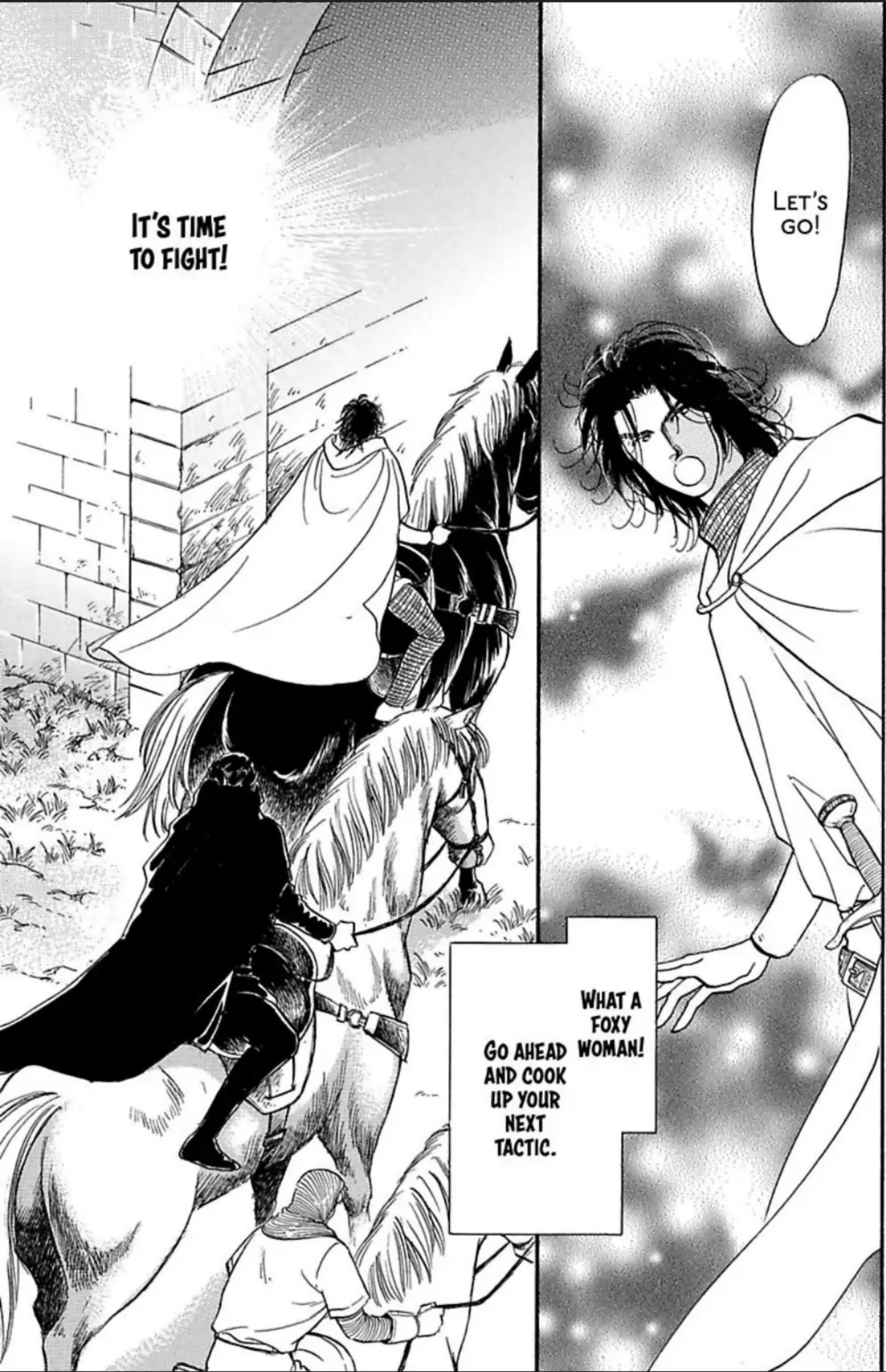

She's going to be my wife.
You don't have to worry about her anymore.
I...
...won't allow you to force yourself on her.
Are you telling me not to touch her?
After the marriage, aren't we supposed to consummate it? Isn't it what all of you preach?
I'm saying rape is a crime.
That doesn't exist between husband and wife!

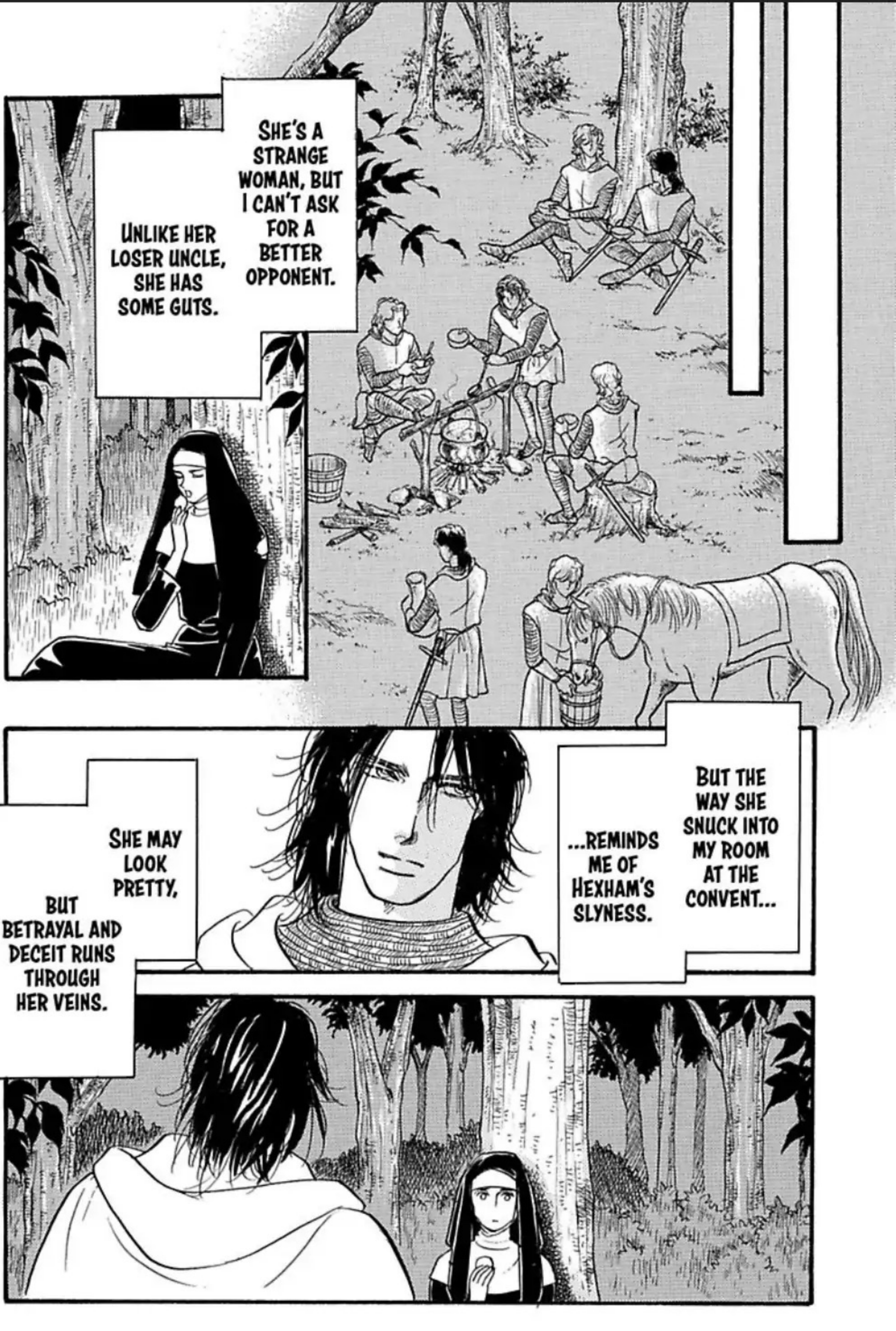

What made you think I'd force myself on her?
Because the way you look at her...
...is filled with hatred.
Please keep what I said in mind, my lord.

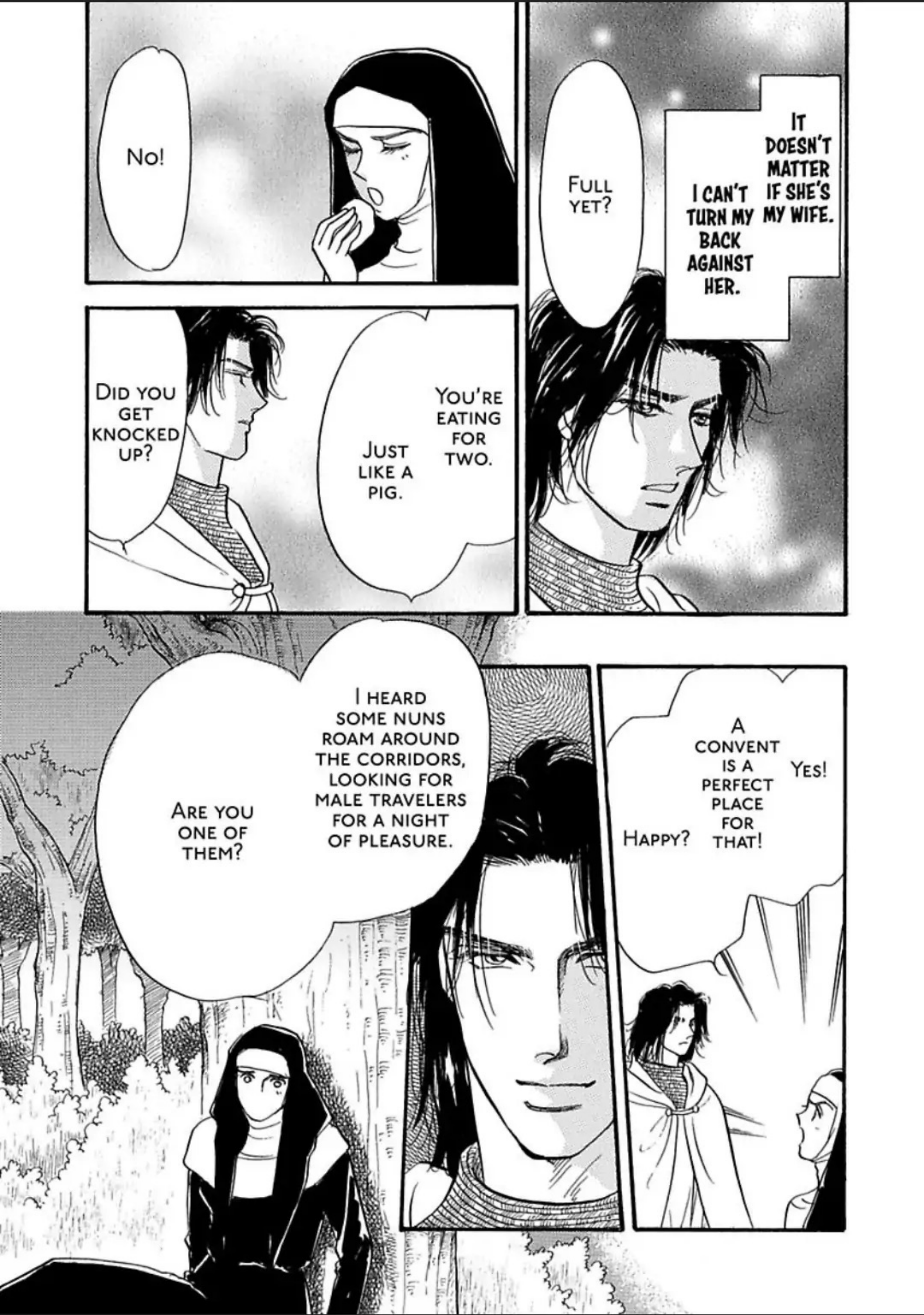

AT ANY RATE, I'VE OBTAINED THE TARGET OF MY REVENGE.
HAVING HER BE MY WIFE WAS TOTALLY UNEXPECTED, THOUGH.
I SEE HER STRONG WILL IN HER EYES. SHE LOOKS LIKE SHE WON'T LET ME GET TO HER THOUGH.
WE'RE LEAVING NOW. SAY YOUR GOODBYES, MY WIFE.

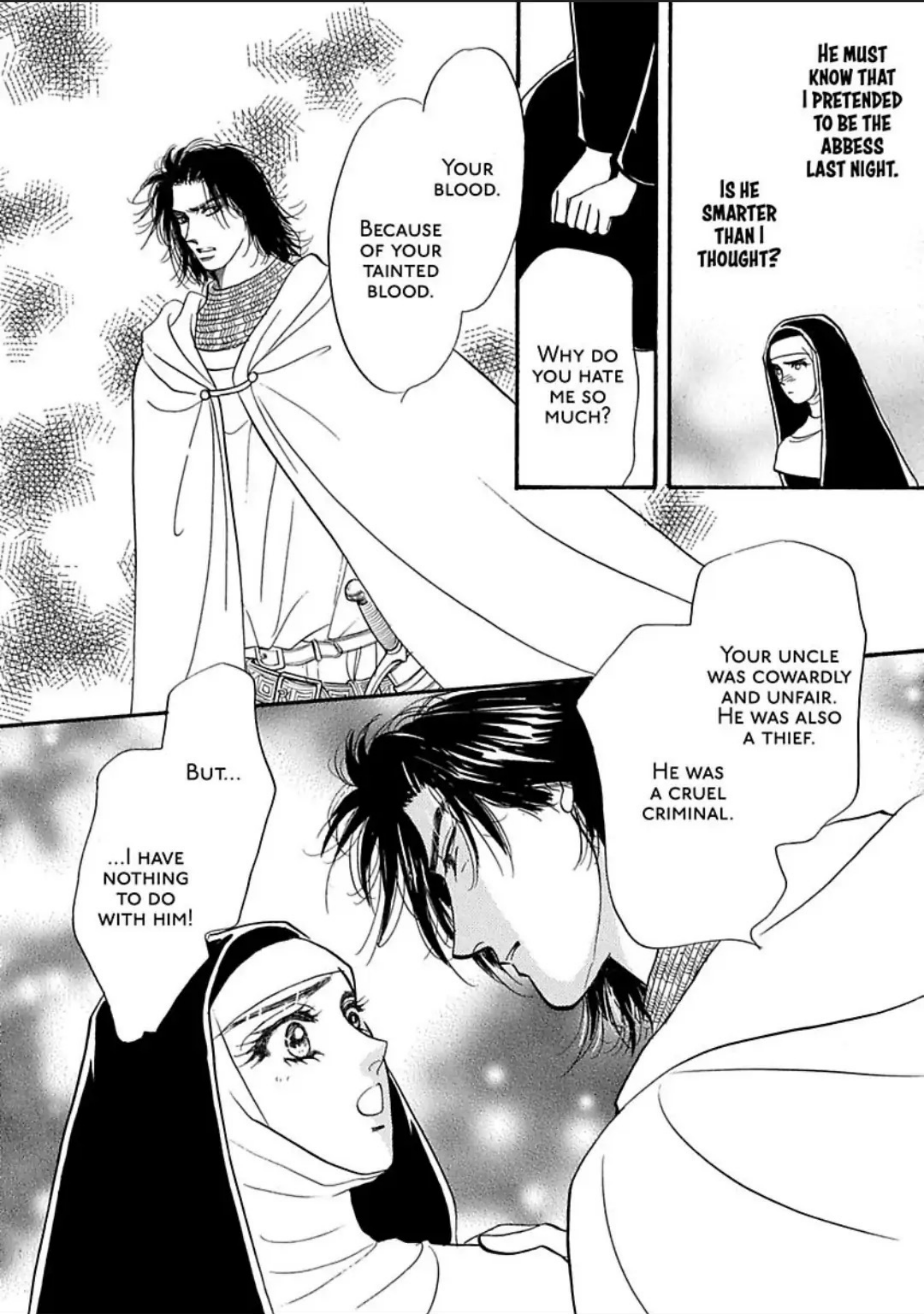

WHAT A STRANGE WOMAN! SHE HAS NO WORDS TO SHARE WITH THE NUNS SHE'S SPENT TIME WITH?
DON'T WORRY. I WON'T FORCE HER TO DO ANYTHING.
MY LORD...
I MUST ADMIT THAT SHE ISN'T THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMAN IN THE WORLD,
BUT GOD SAYS, "THE MORE CHILDREN, THE MERRIER."
THAT'S NOT WHAT YOU SAID LAST NIGHT.
HUH?

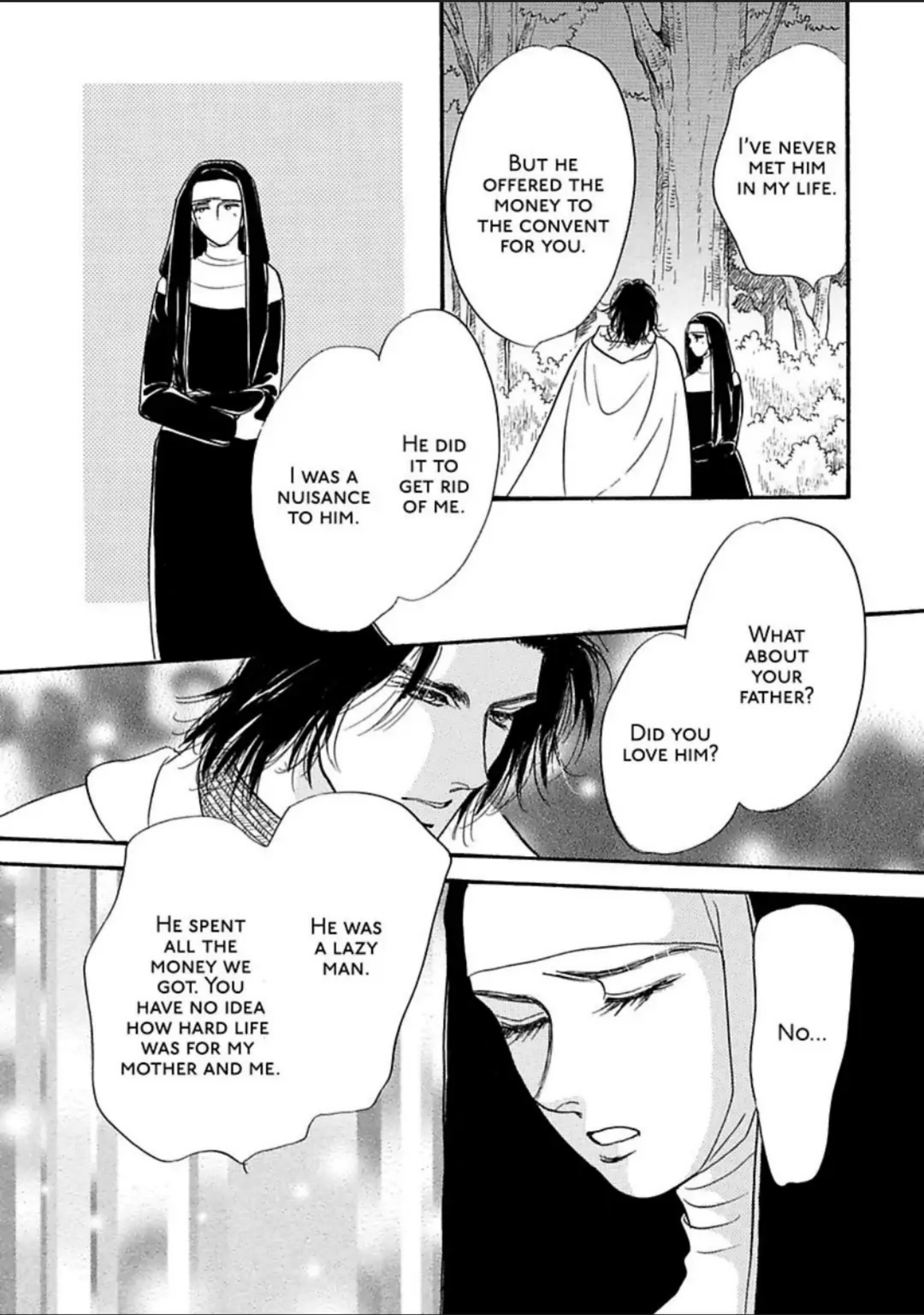

WAIT A MINUTE!
SHE DOESN'T KNOW SHAME?
THIS IS GOING TO BE INTERESTING.
I DIDN'T EXPECT HER TO BE LIKE THIS.
BUT THAT MAY MAKE THIS REVENGE GAME MORE FUN.

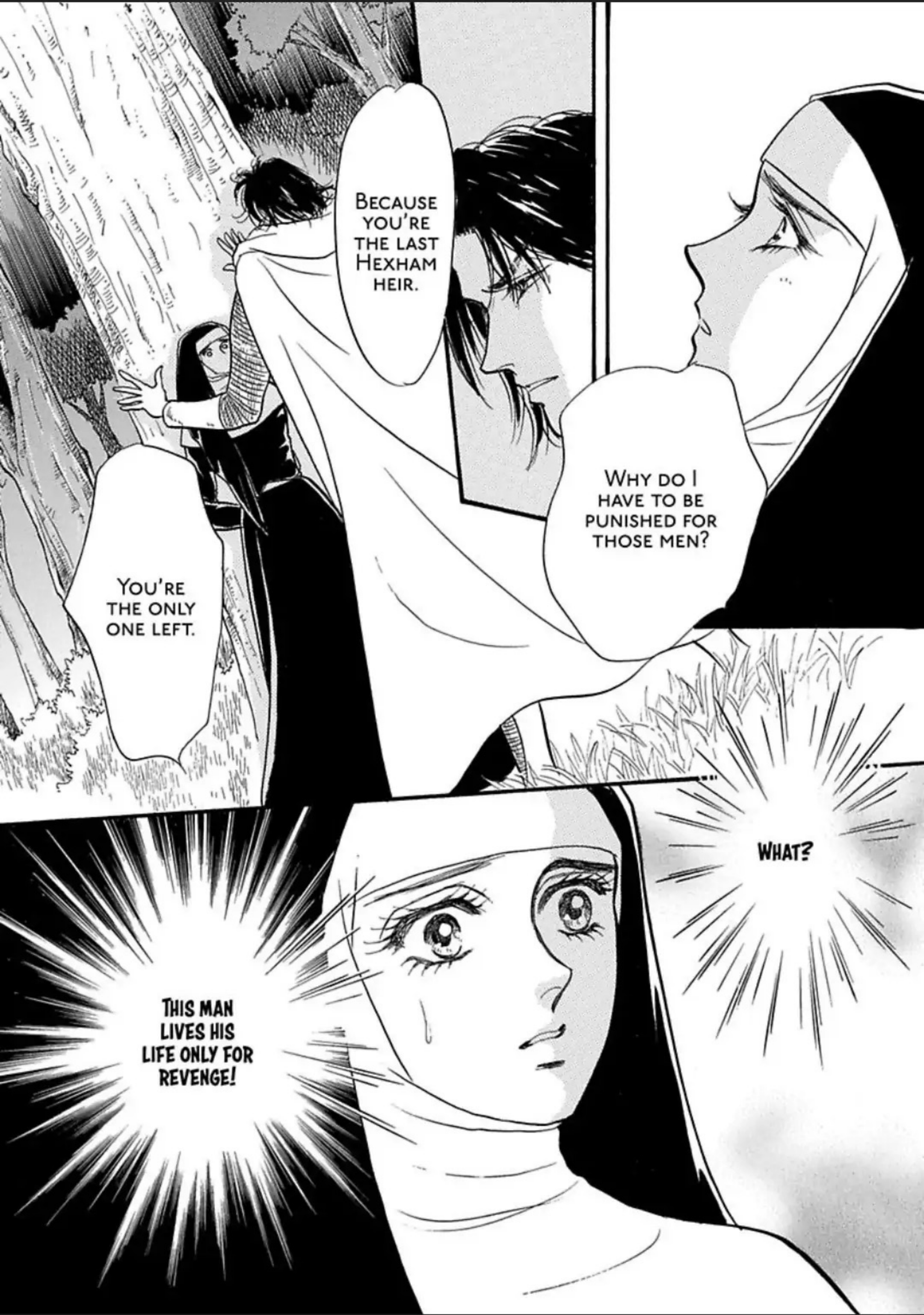

Let's go!
It's time to fight!
What a foxy woman!
Go ahead and cook up your next tactic.

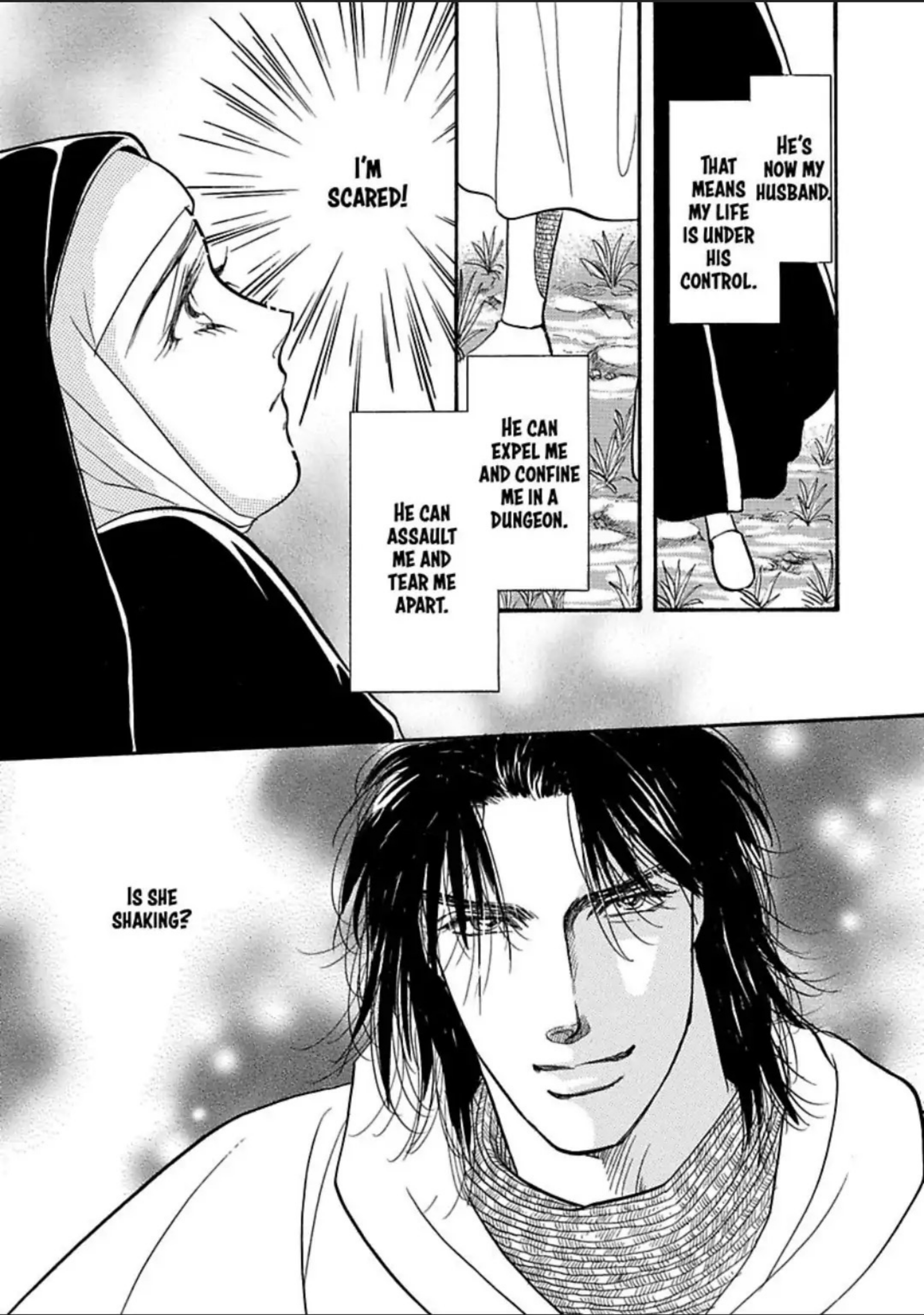

SHE'S A STRANGE WOMAN, BUT I CAN'T ASK FOR A BETTER OPPONENT.
UNLIKE HER LOSER UNCLE, SHE HAS SOME GUTS.
BUT THE WAY SHE SNUCK INTO MY ROOM AT THE CONVENT...
...REMINDS ME OF HEXHAM'S SLYNESS.
SHE MAY LOOK PRETTY,
BUT BETRAYAL AND DECEIT RUNS THROUGH HER VEINS.

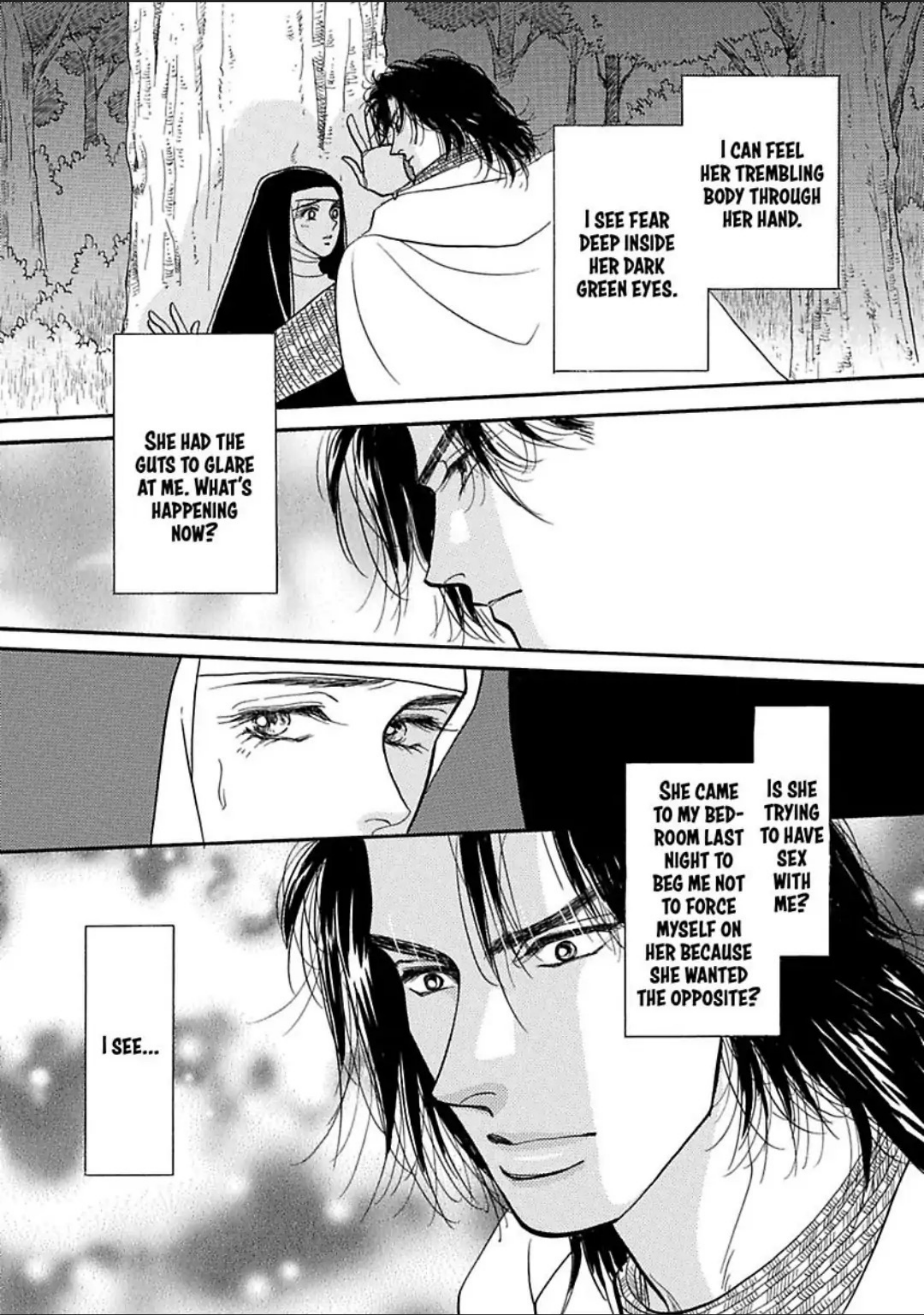

It doesn't matter if she's my wife.
I can't turn my back against her.
Full yet?
No!
You're eating for two.
Just like a pig.
Did you get knocked up?
Yes!
A convent is a perfect place for that!
Happy?
I heard some nuns roam around the corridors, looking for male travelers for a night of pleasure.
Are you one of them?

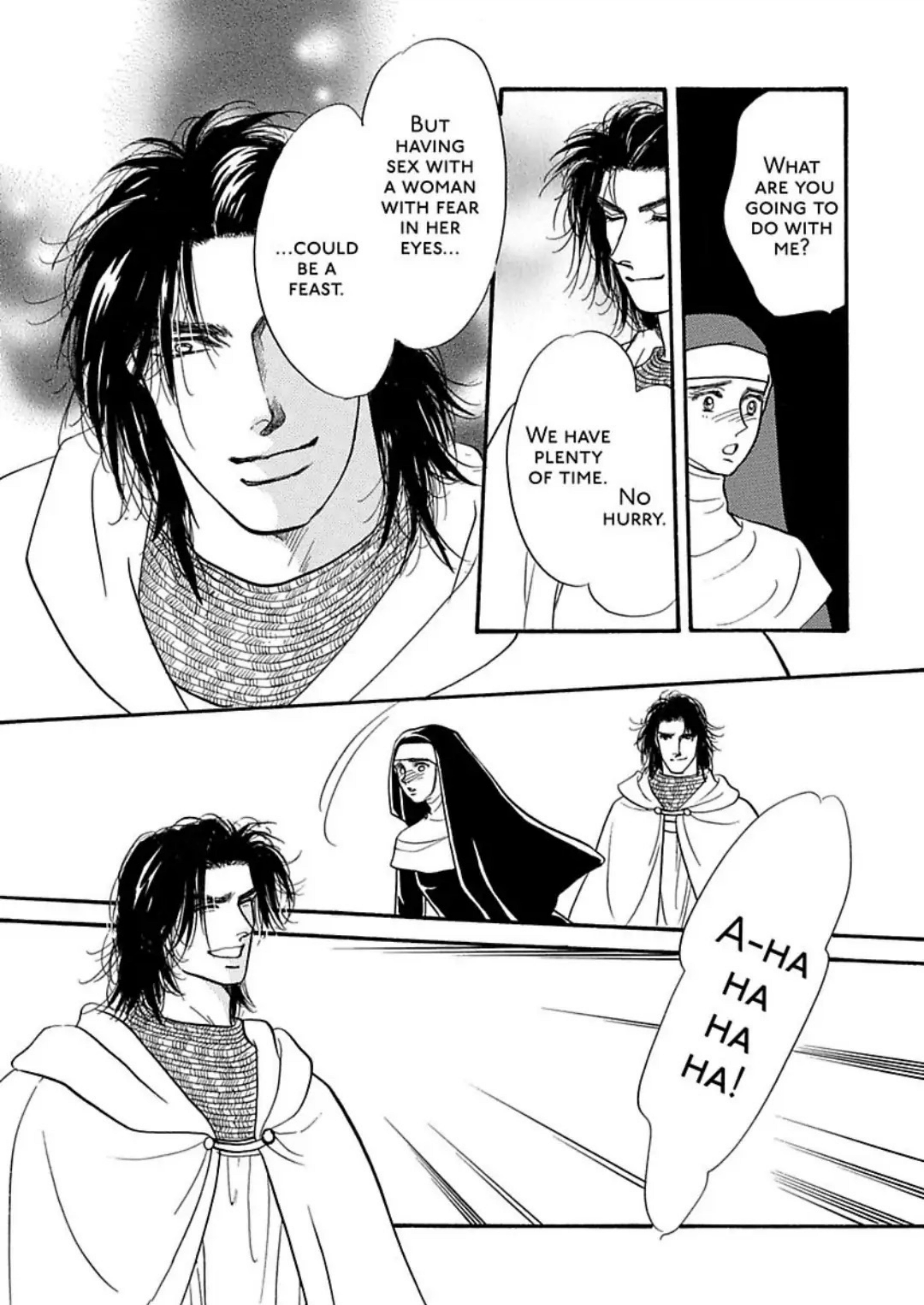

He must know that I pretended to be the abbess last night.
Is he smarter than I thought?
Why do you hate me so much?
Your blood.
Because of your tainted blood.
Your uncle was cowardly and unfair. He was also a thief.
He was a cruel criminal.
But...
...I have nothing to do with him!

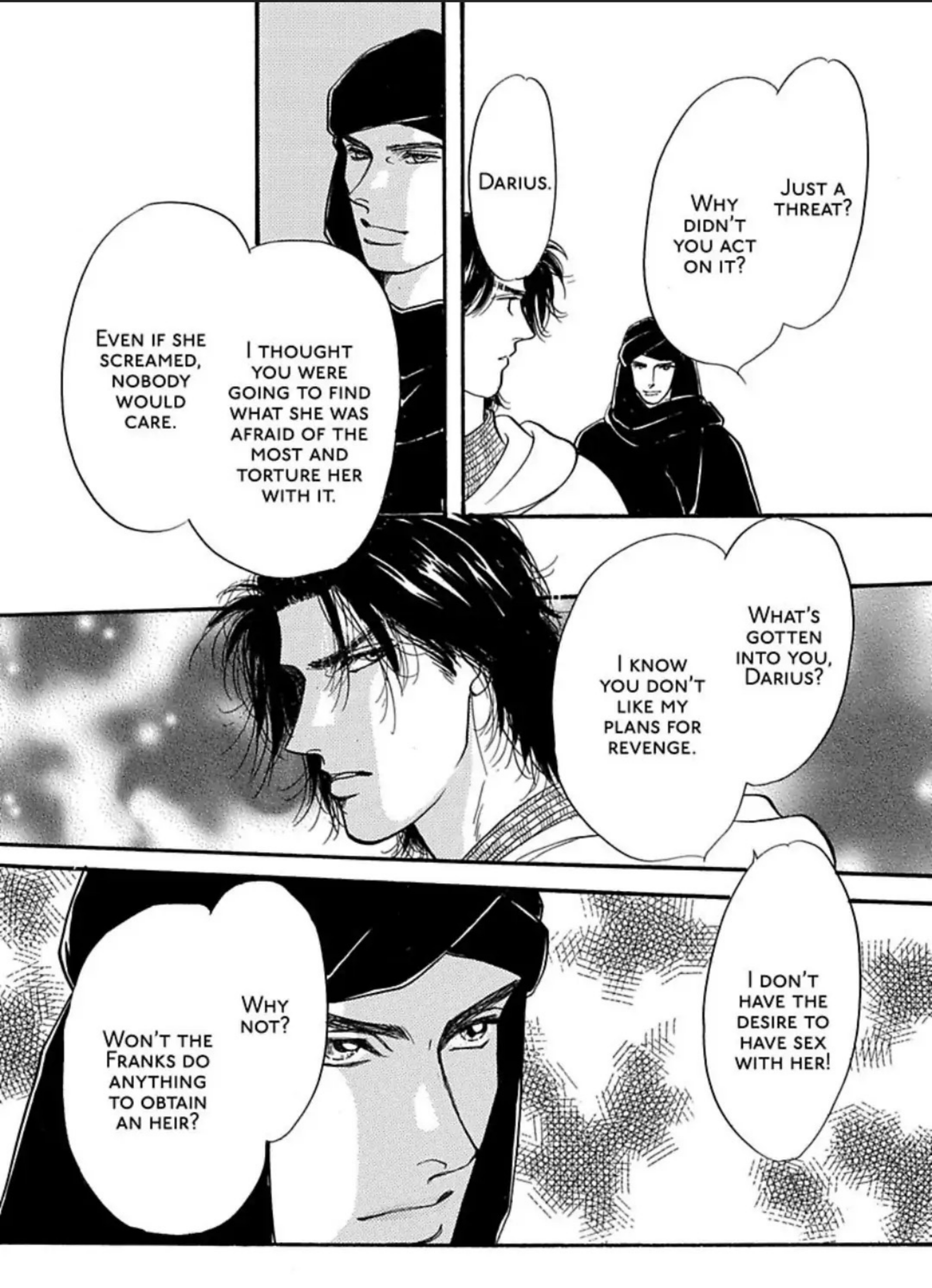

I've never met him in my life.
But he offered the money to the convent for you.
He did it to get rid of me.
I was a nuisance to him.
What about your father?
Did you love him?
No...
He was a lazy man.
He spent all the money we got. You have no idea how hard life was for my mother and me.

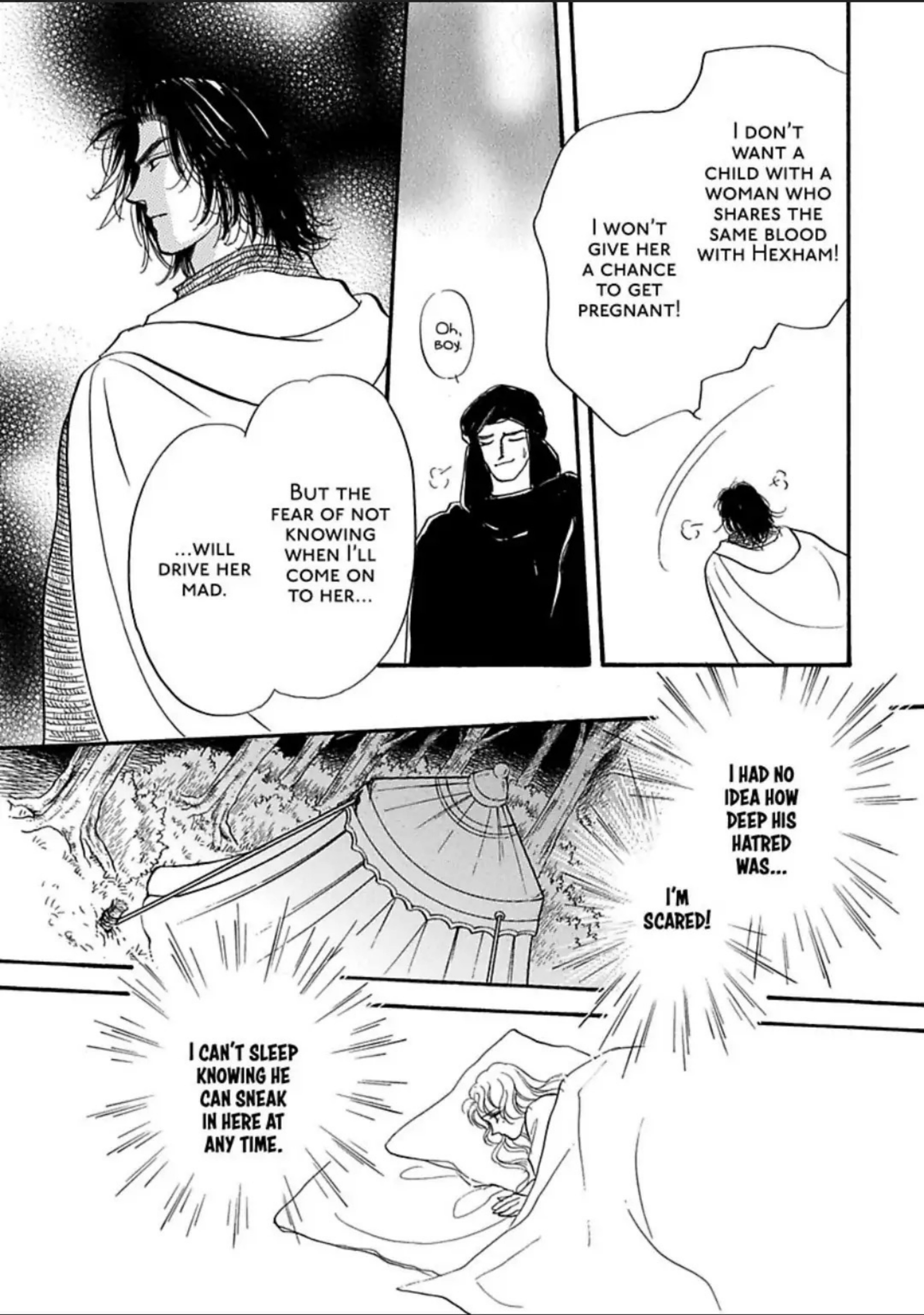

Why do I have to be punished for those men?
Because you're the last Hexham heir.
You're the only one left.
What?
This man lives his life only for revenge!

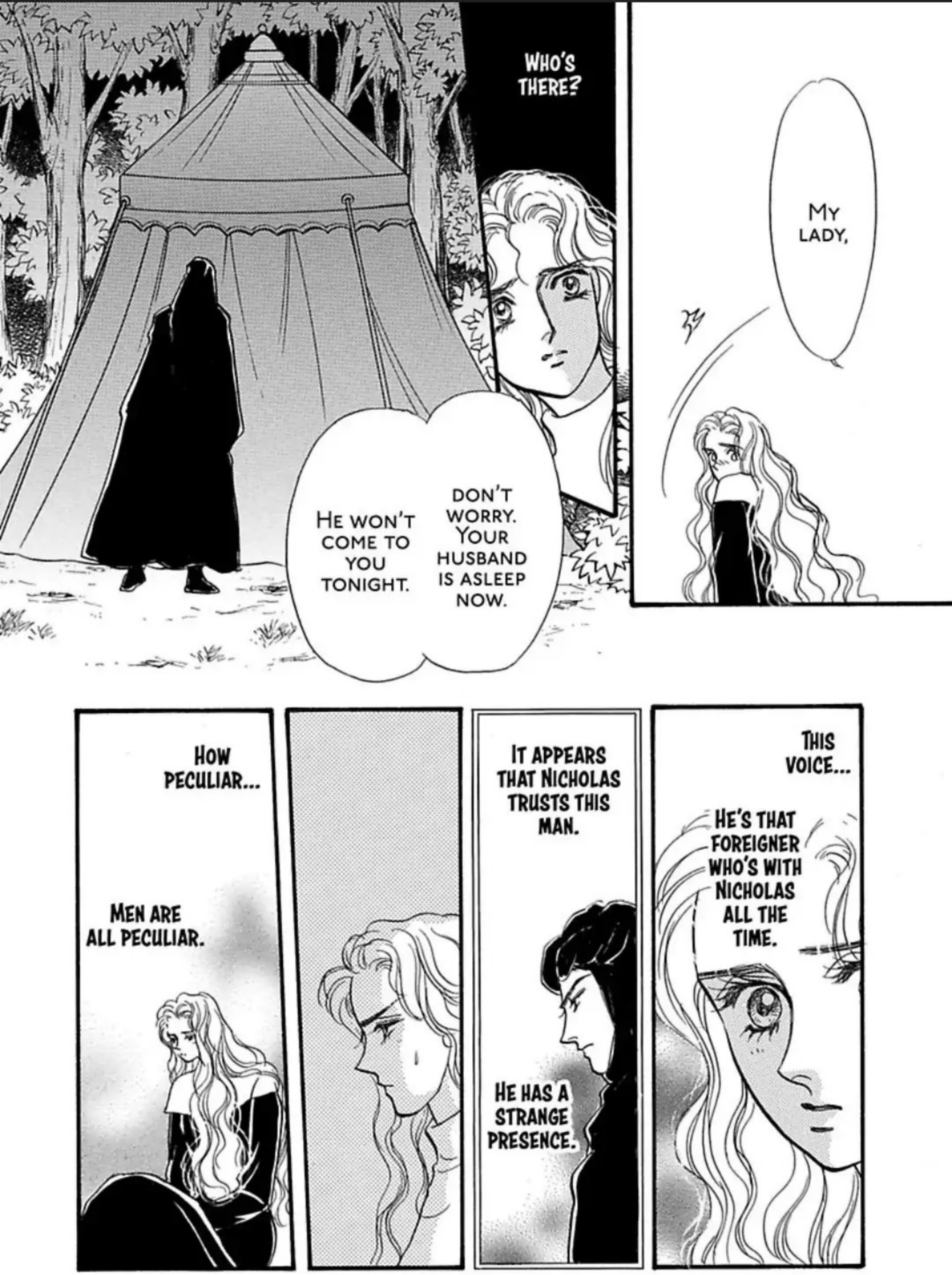

He's now my husband.
That means my life is under his control.
He can expel me and confine me in a dungeon.
He can assault me and tear me apart.
I'm scared!
Is she shaking?

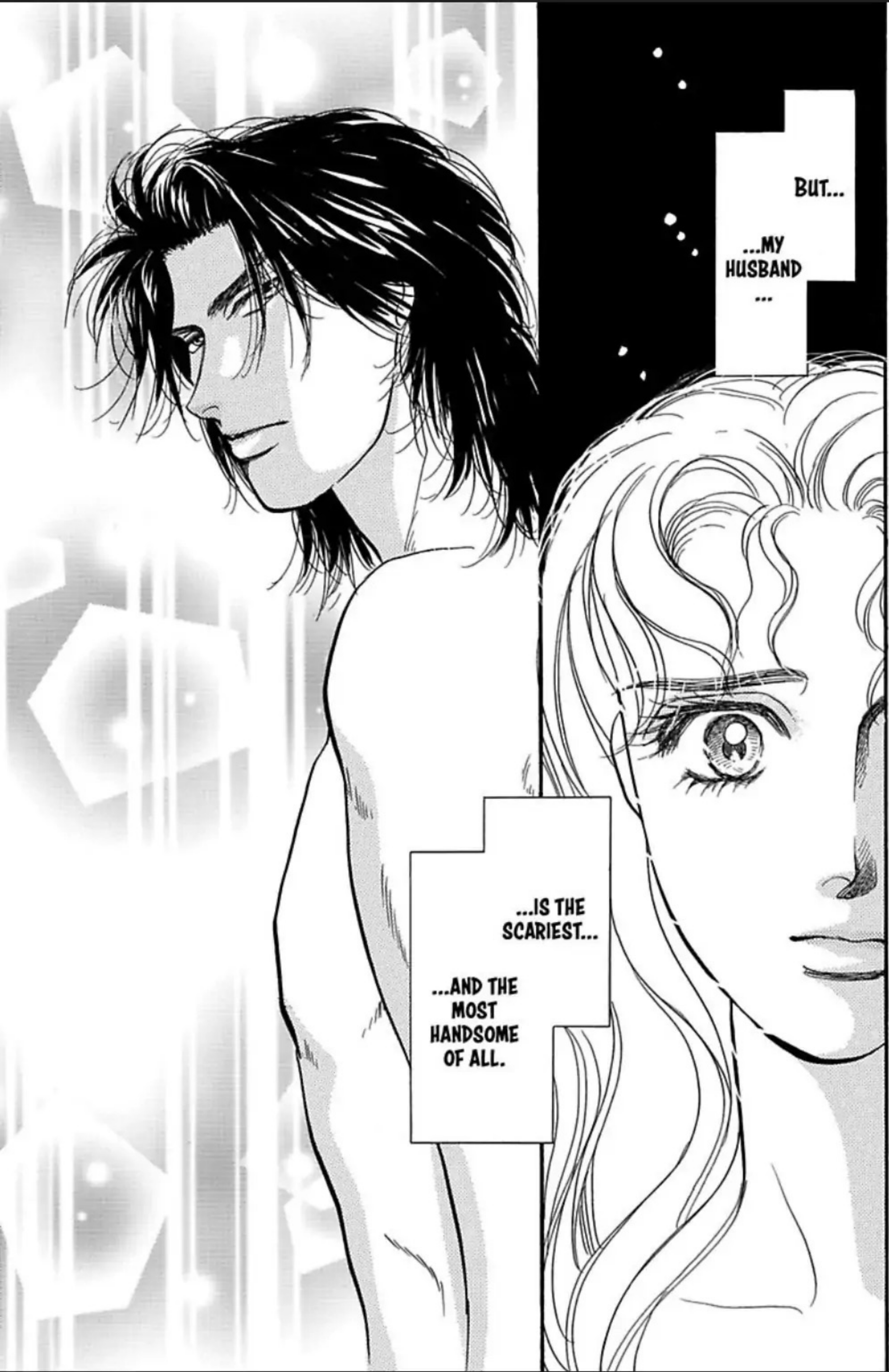

I CAN FEEL HER TREMBLING BODY THROUGH HER HAND.
I SEE FEAR DEEP INSIDE HER DARK GREEN EYES.
SHE HAD THE GUTS TO GLARE AT ME. WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW?
IS SHE TRYING TO HAVE SEX WITH ME?
SHE CAME TO MY BEDROOM LAST NIGHT TO BEG ME NOT TO FORCE MYSELF ON HER BECAUSE SHE WANTED THE OPPOSITE?
I SEE...

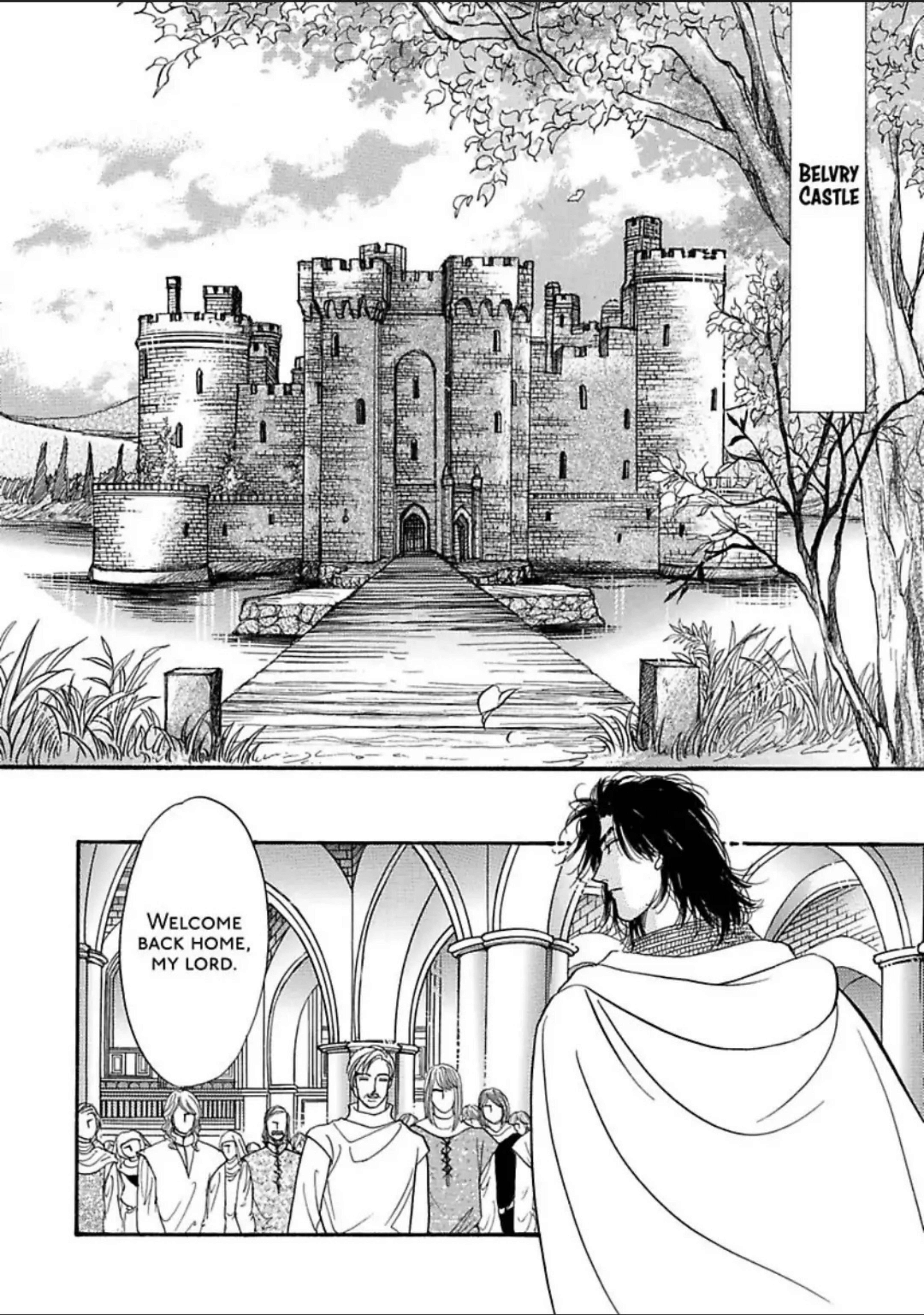

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH ME?
WE HAVE PLENTY OF TIME. NO HURRY.
BUT HAVING SEX WITH A WOMAN WITH FEAR IN HER EYES...
...COULD BE A FEAST.
A-HA HA HA HA!

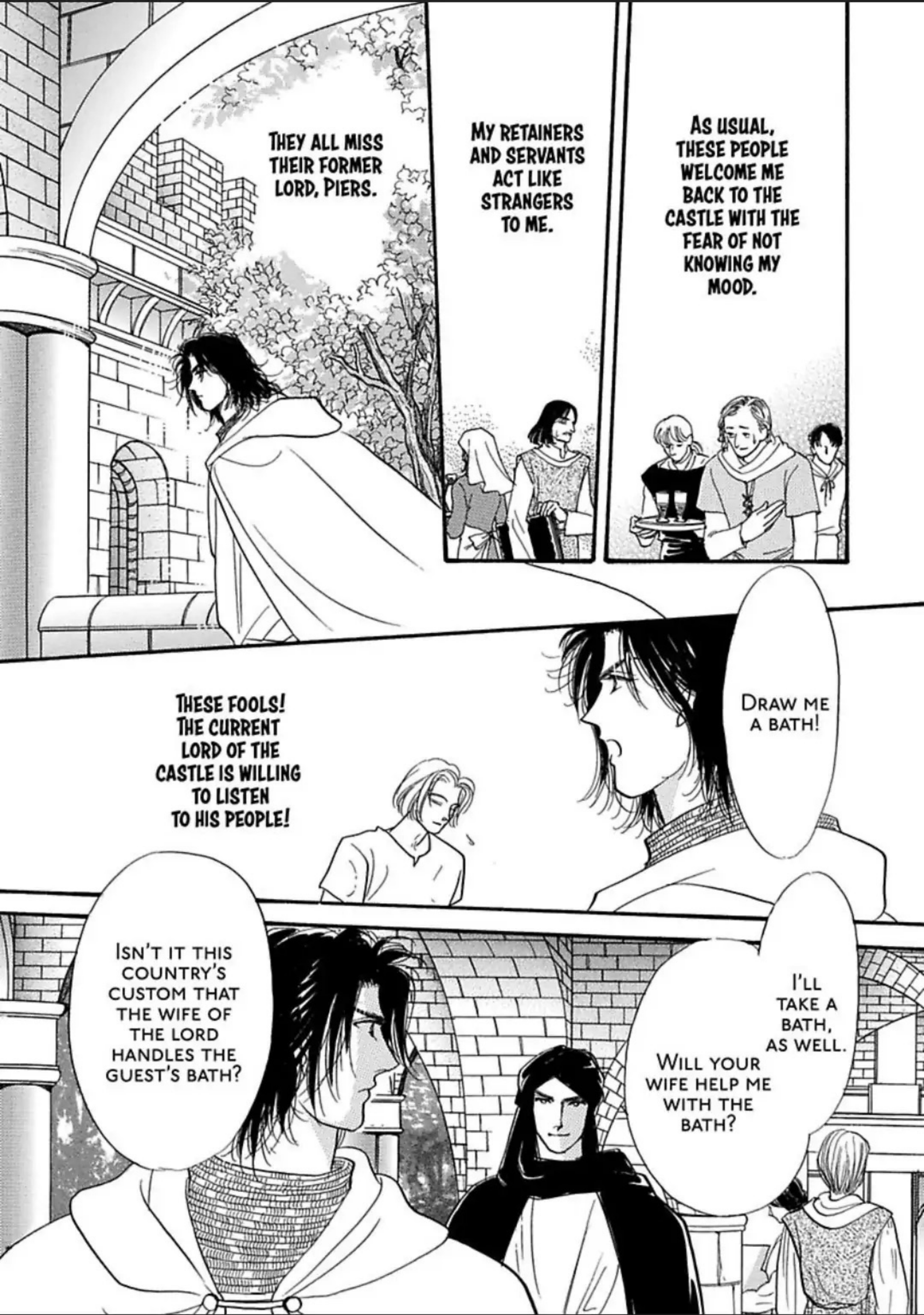

Just a threat?
Why didn't you act on it?
Darius.
I thought you were going to find what she was afraid of the most and torture her with it.
Even if she screamed, nobody would care.
What's gotten into you, Darius?
I know you don't like my plans for revenge.
I don't have the desire to have sex with her!
Why not?
Won't the Franks do anything to obtain an heir?

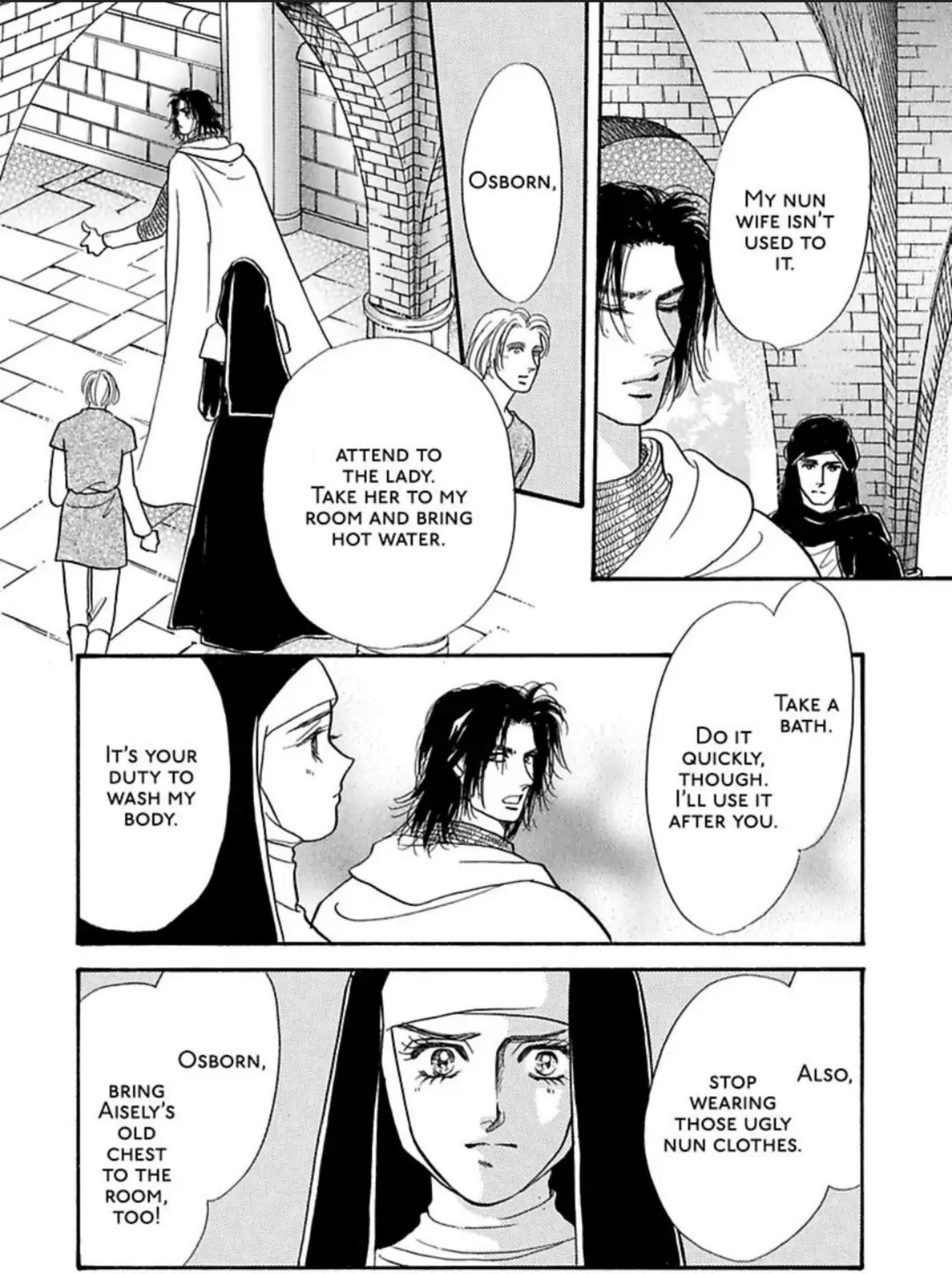

I DON'T WANT A CHILD WITH A WOMAN WHO SHARES THE SAME BLOOD WITH HEXHAM!
I WON'T GIVE HER A CHANCE TO GET PREGNANT!
Oh, boy.
BUT THE FEAR OF NOT KNOWING WHEN I'LL COME ON TO HER...
...WILL DRIVE HER MAD.
I HAD NO IDEA HOW DEEP HIS HATRED WAS...
I'M SCARED!
I CAN'T SLEEP KNOWING HE CAN SNEAK IN HERE AT ANY TIME.

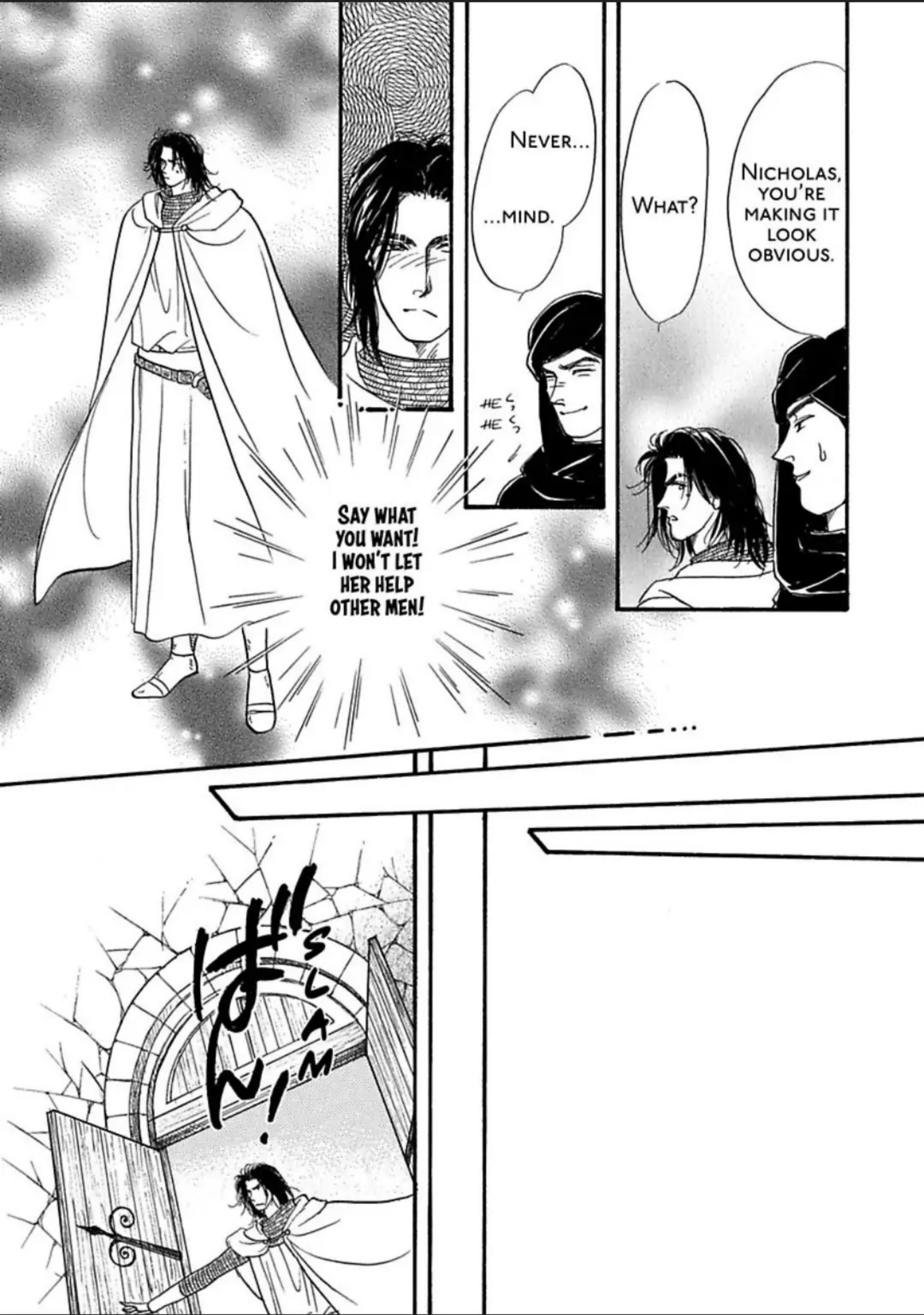

My lady,
Who's there?
Don't worry. Your husband is asleep now.
He won't come to you tonight.
This voice...
He's that foreigner who's with Nicholas all the time.
It appears that Nicholas trusts this man.
He has a strange presence.
How peculiar...
Men are all peculiar.

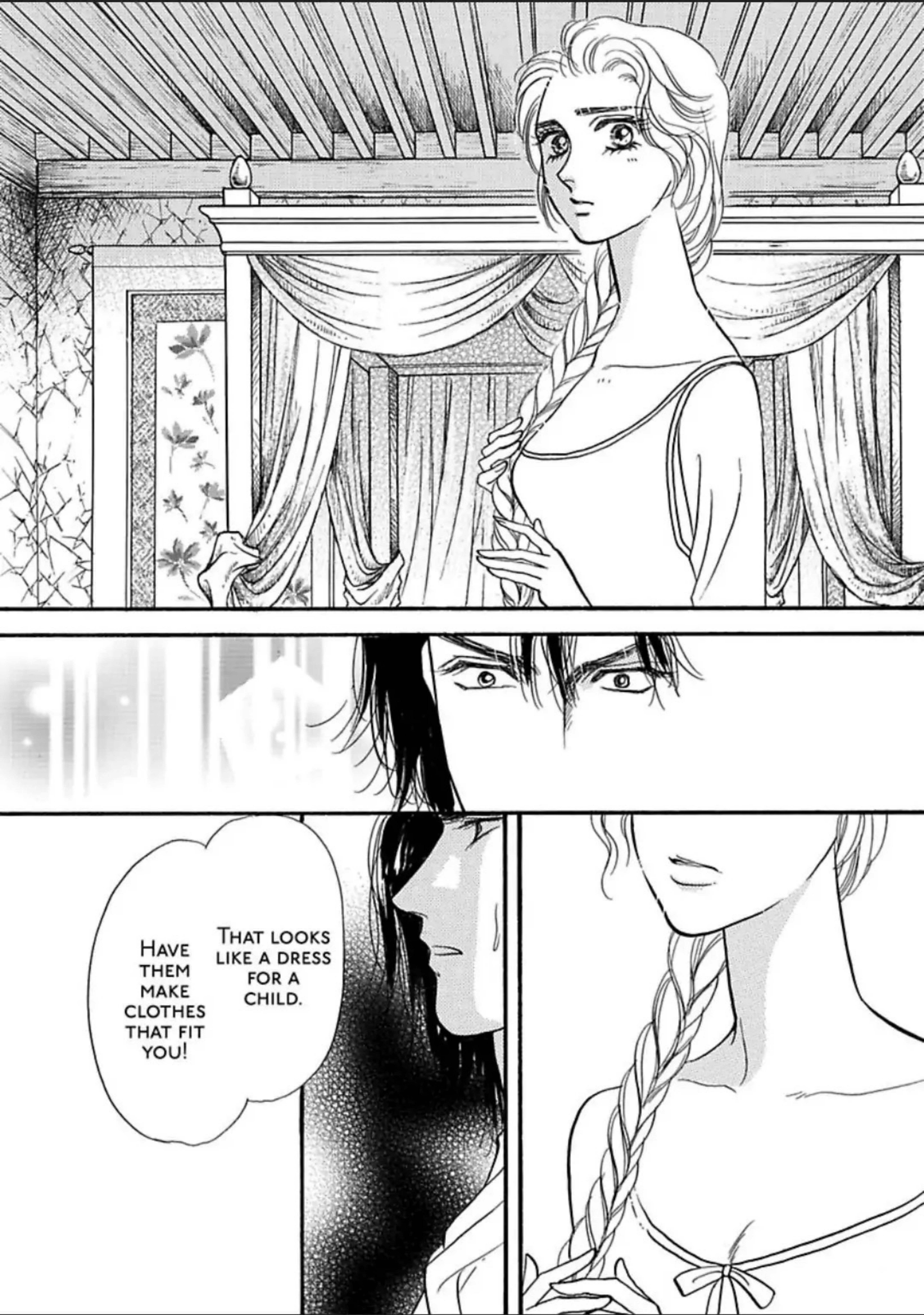

BUT...
...MY HUSBAND ...
...IS THE SCARIEST...
...AND THE MOST HANDSOME OF ALL.

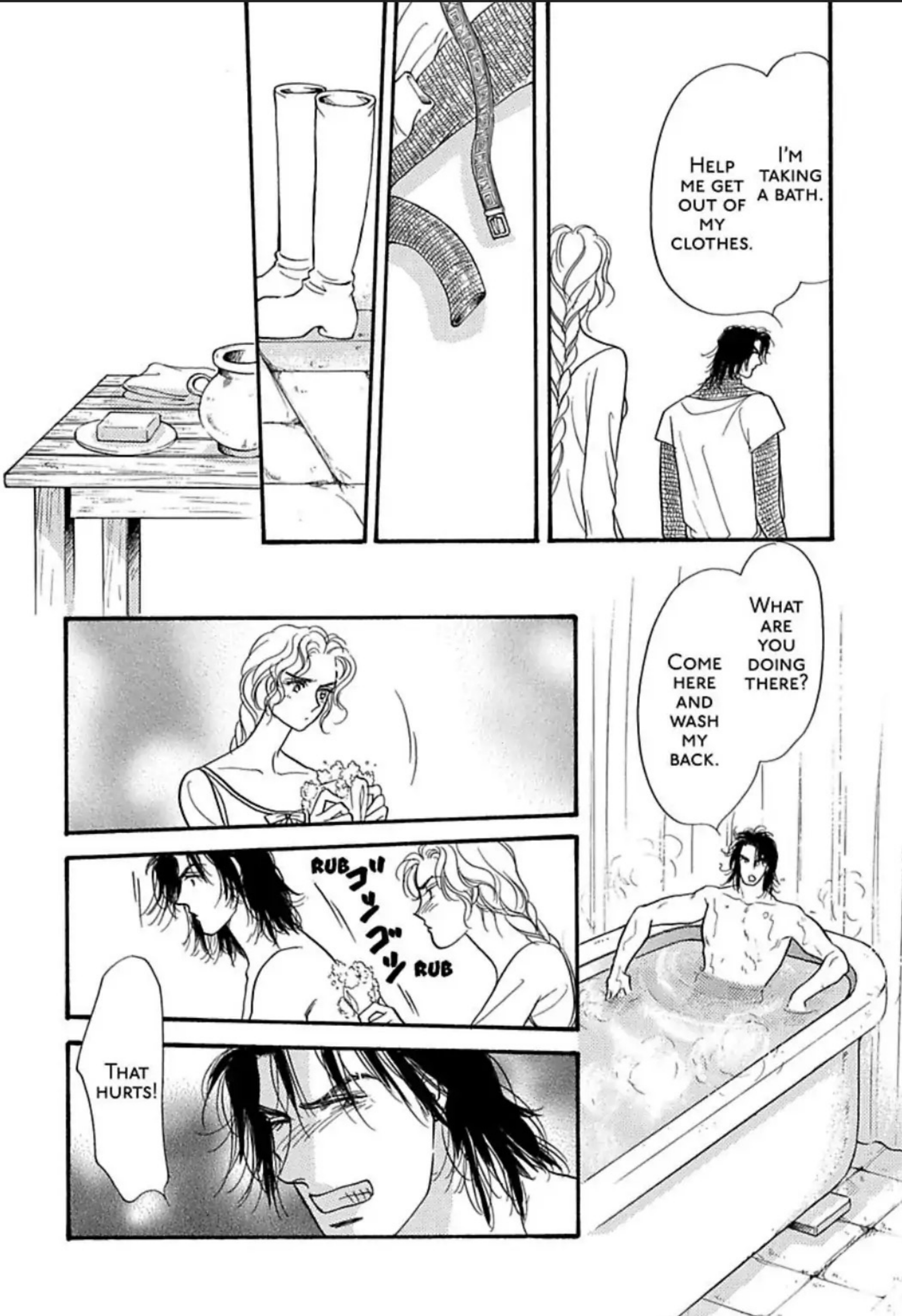

Belvry Castle
Welcome back home, my lord.

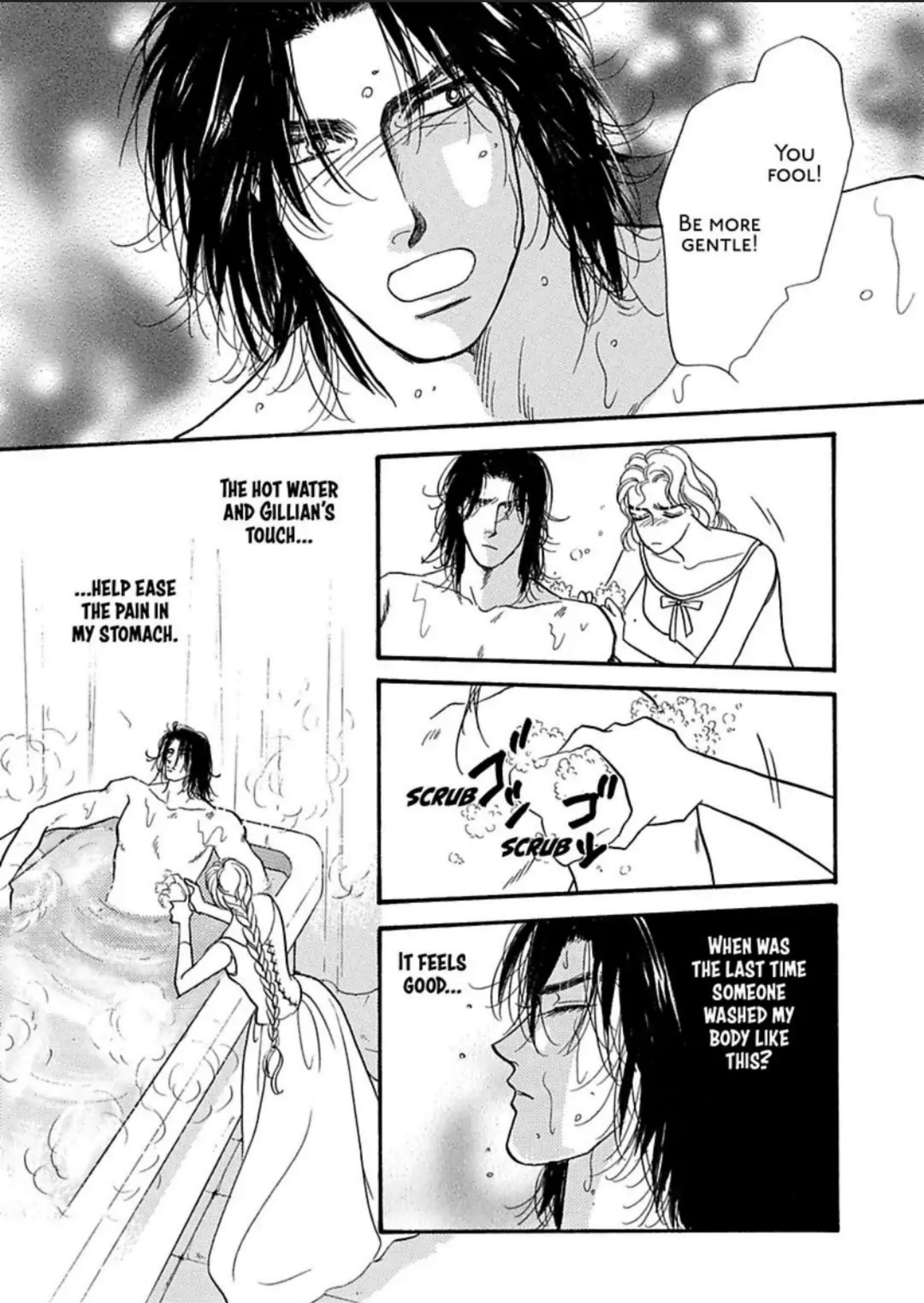

As usual, these people welcome me back to the castle with the fear of not knowing my mood.
My retainers and servants act like strangers to me.
They all miss their former lord, Piers.
Draw me a bath!
These fools! The current lord of the castle is willing to listen to his people!
I'll take a bath, as well.
Will your wife help me with the bath?
Isn't it this country's custom that the wife of the lord handles the guest's bath?

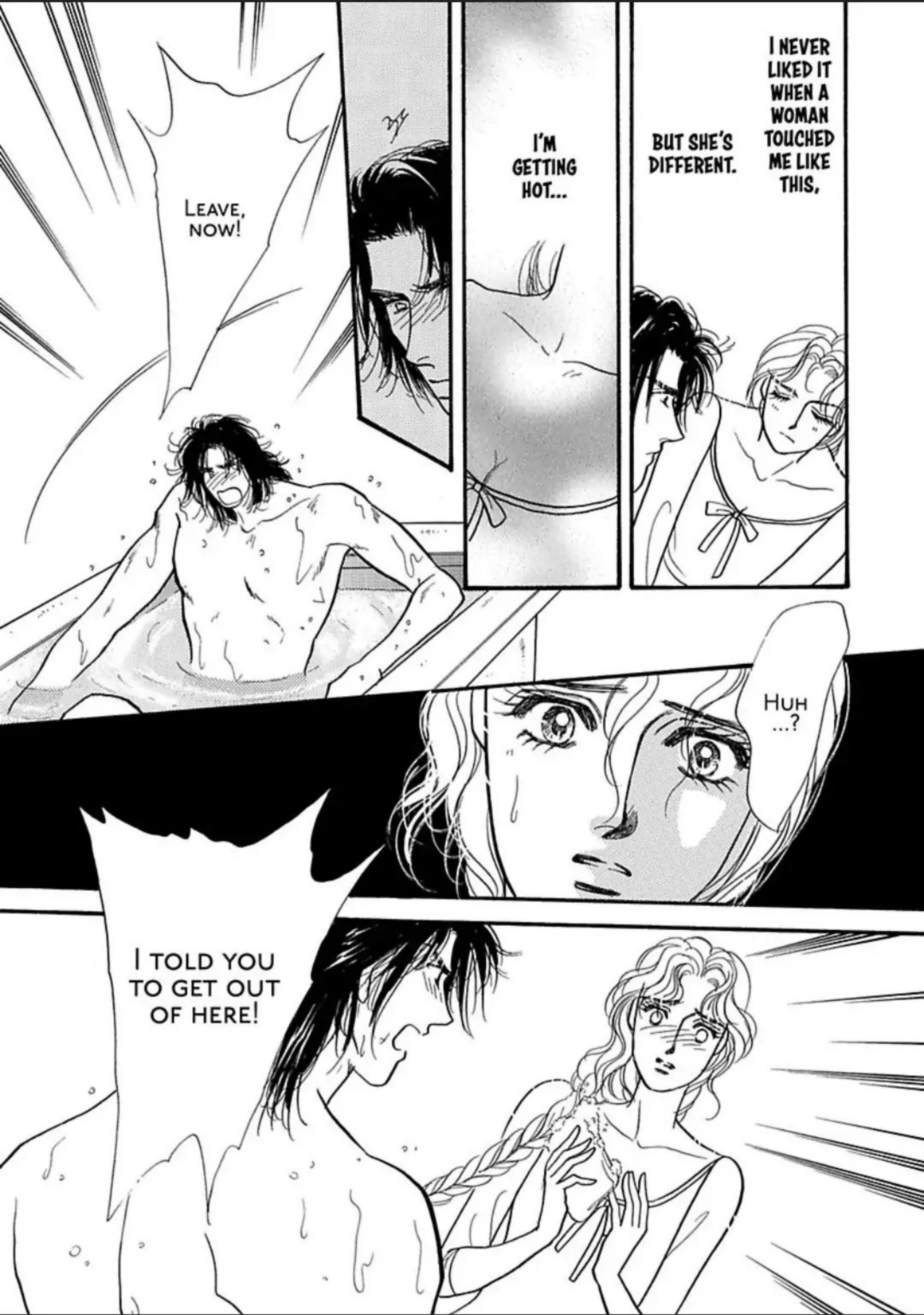

My nun wife isn't used to it.
Osborn,
Attend to the lady. Take her to my room and bring hot water.
Take a bath. Do it quickly, though. I'll use it after you.
It's your duty to wash my body.
Also, stop wearing those ugly nun clothes.
Osborn, bring Aisely's old chest to the room, too!

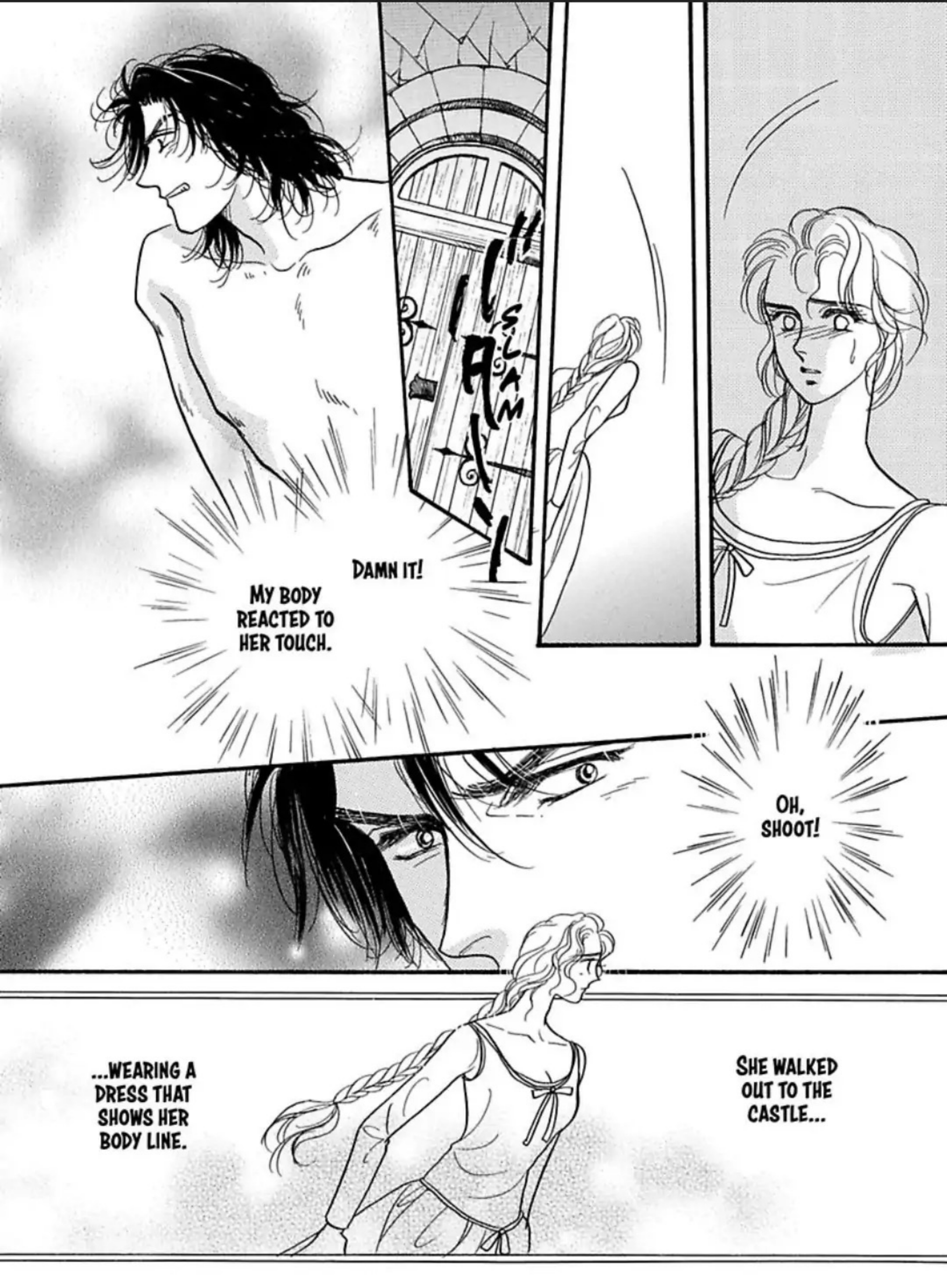

Nicholas, you're making it look obvious.
What?
Never...
...mind.
HE HE
Say what you want! I won't let her help other men!
ばん!
SLAM!

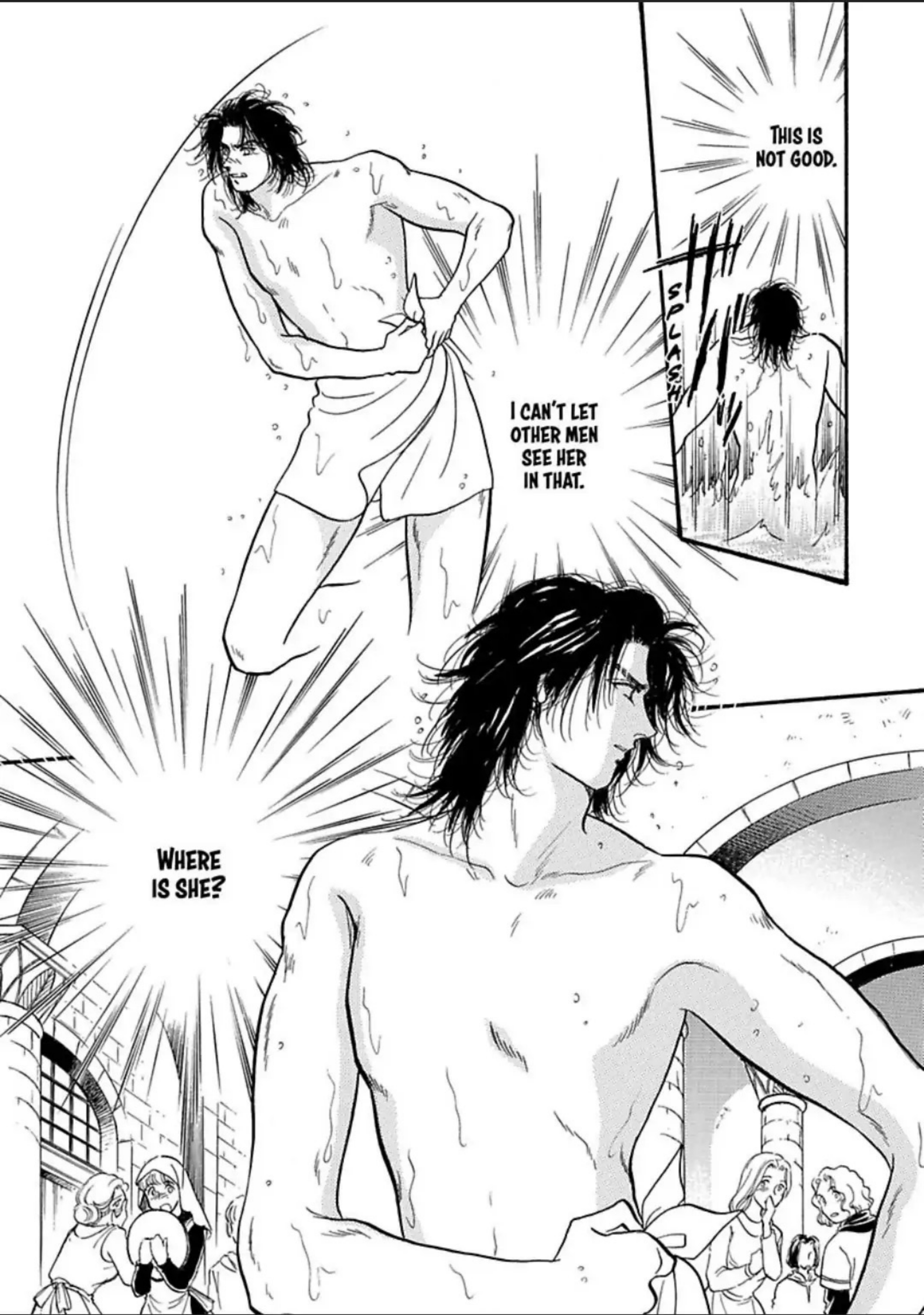

That looks like a dress for a child.
Have them make clothes that fit you!

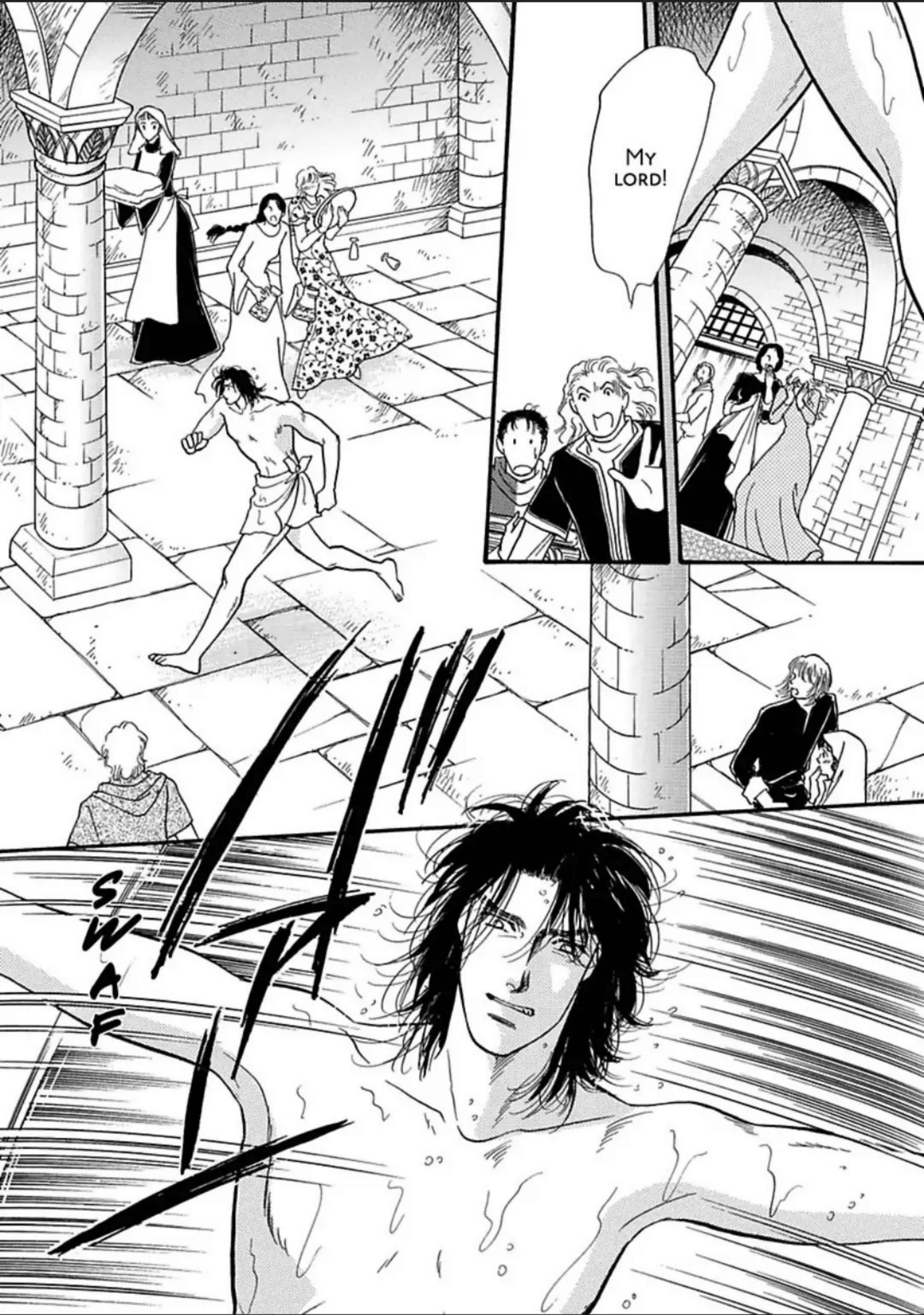

I'm taking a bath.
Help me get out of my clothes.
What are you doing there?
Come here and wash my back.
RUB ゴッ
ゴッ RUB
That hurts!

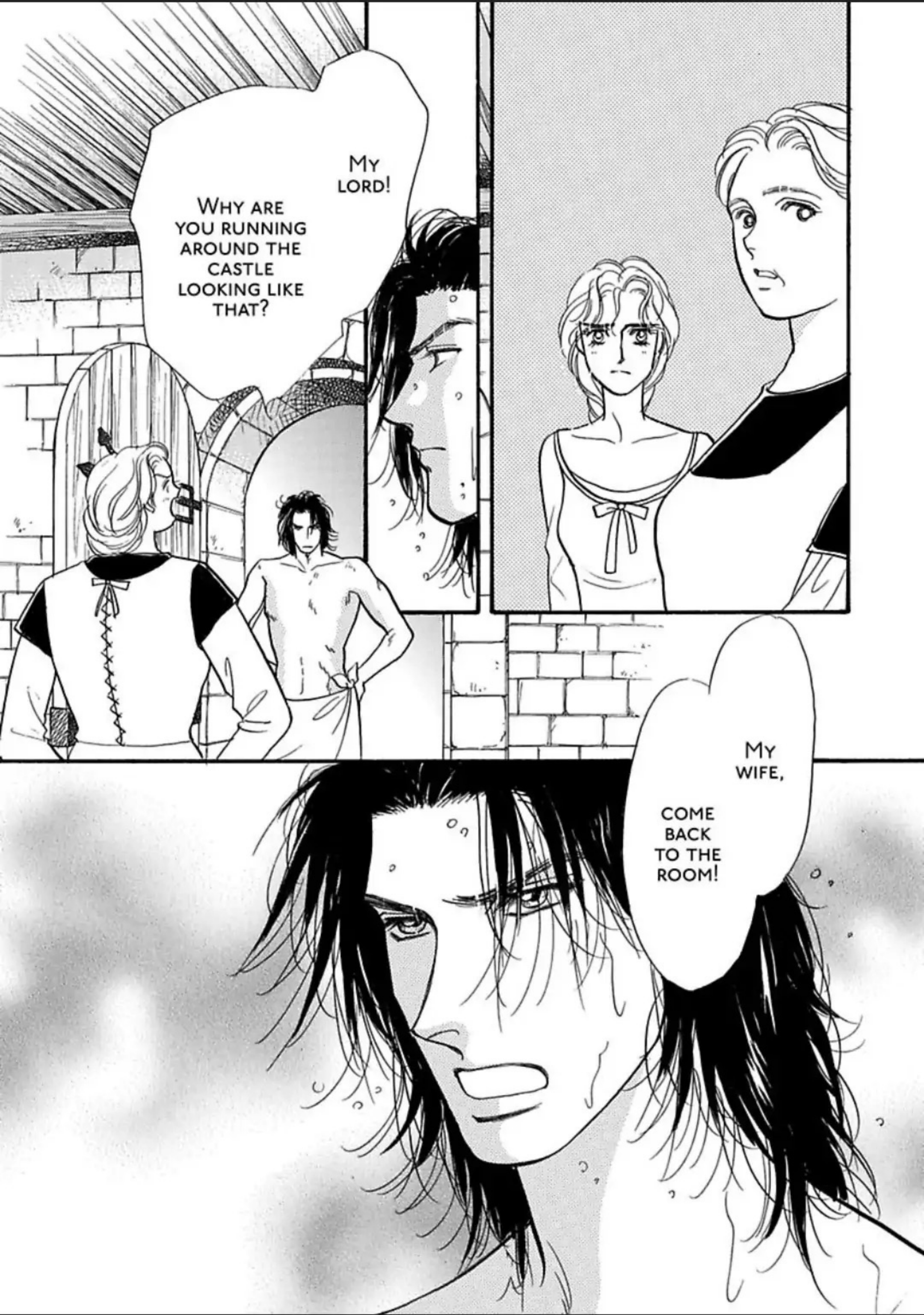

You fool!
Be more gentle!
The hot water and Gillian's touch...
...help ease the pain in my stomach.
SCRUB
SCRUB
When was the last time someone washed my body like this?
It feels good...

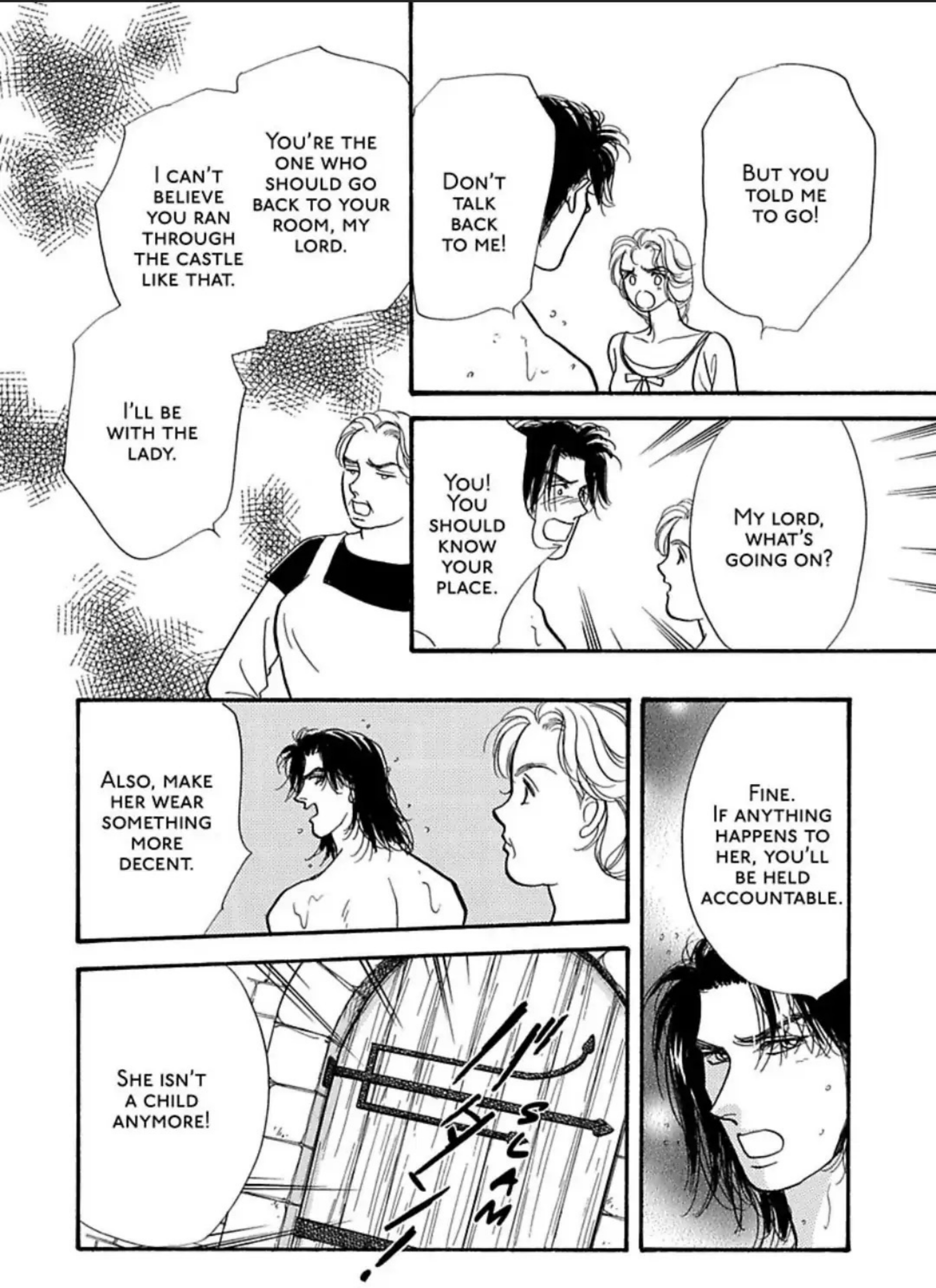

I NEVER LIKED IT WHEN A WOMAN TOUCHED ME LIKE THIS,
BUT SHE'S DIFFERENT.
I'M GETTING HOT...
LEAVE, NOW!
HUH ...?
I TOLD YOU TO GET OUT OF HERE!

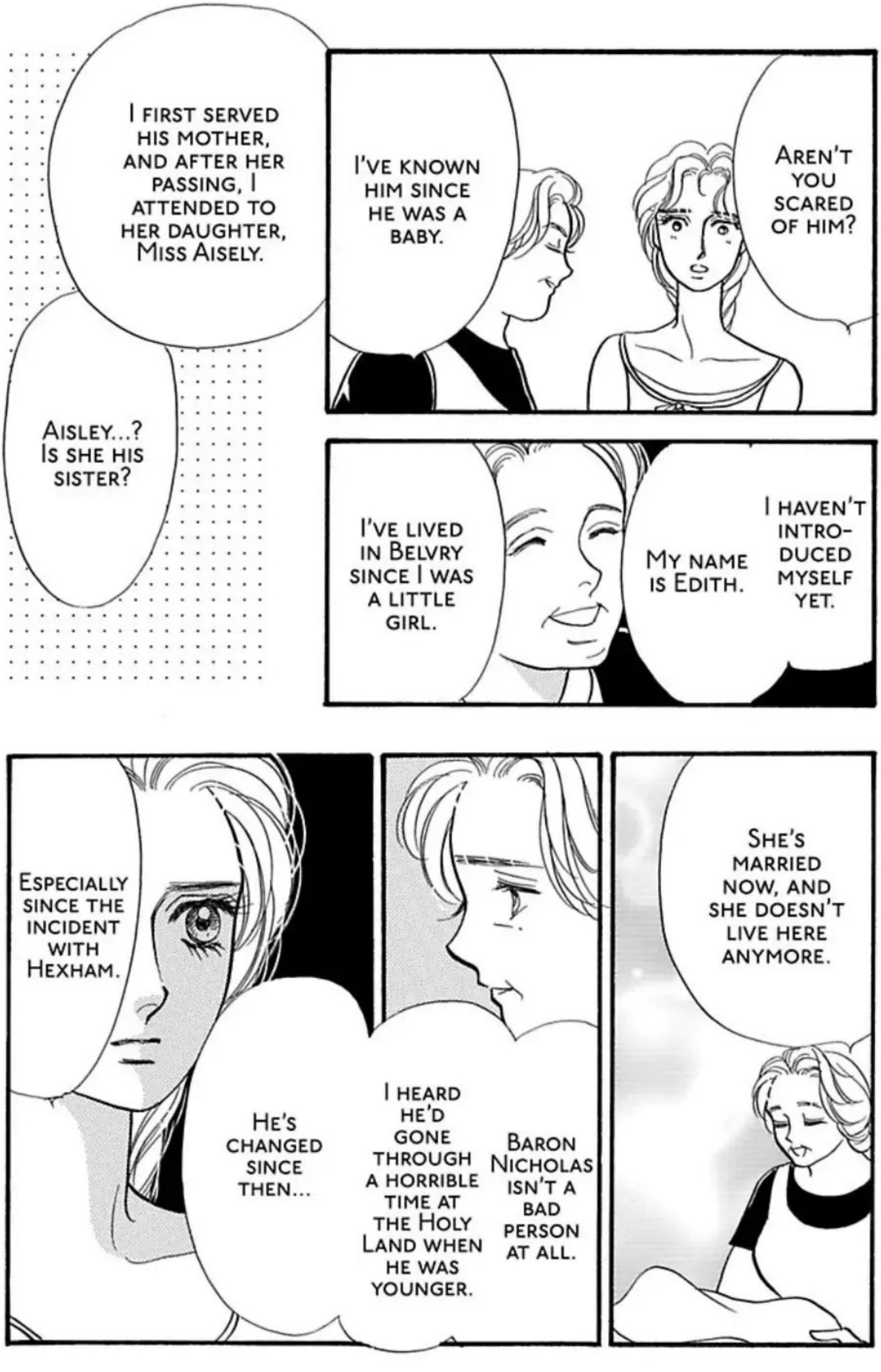

SLAM
DAMN IT!
MY BODY REACTED TO HER TOUCH.
OH, SHOOT!
SHE WALKED OUT TO THE CASTLE...
...WEARING A DRESS THAT SHOWS HER BODY LINE.

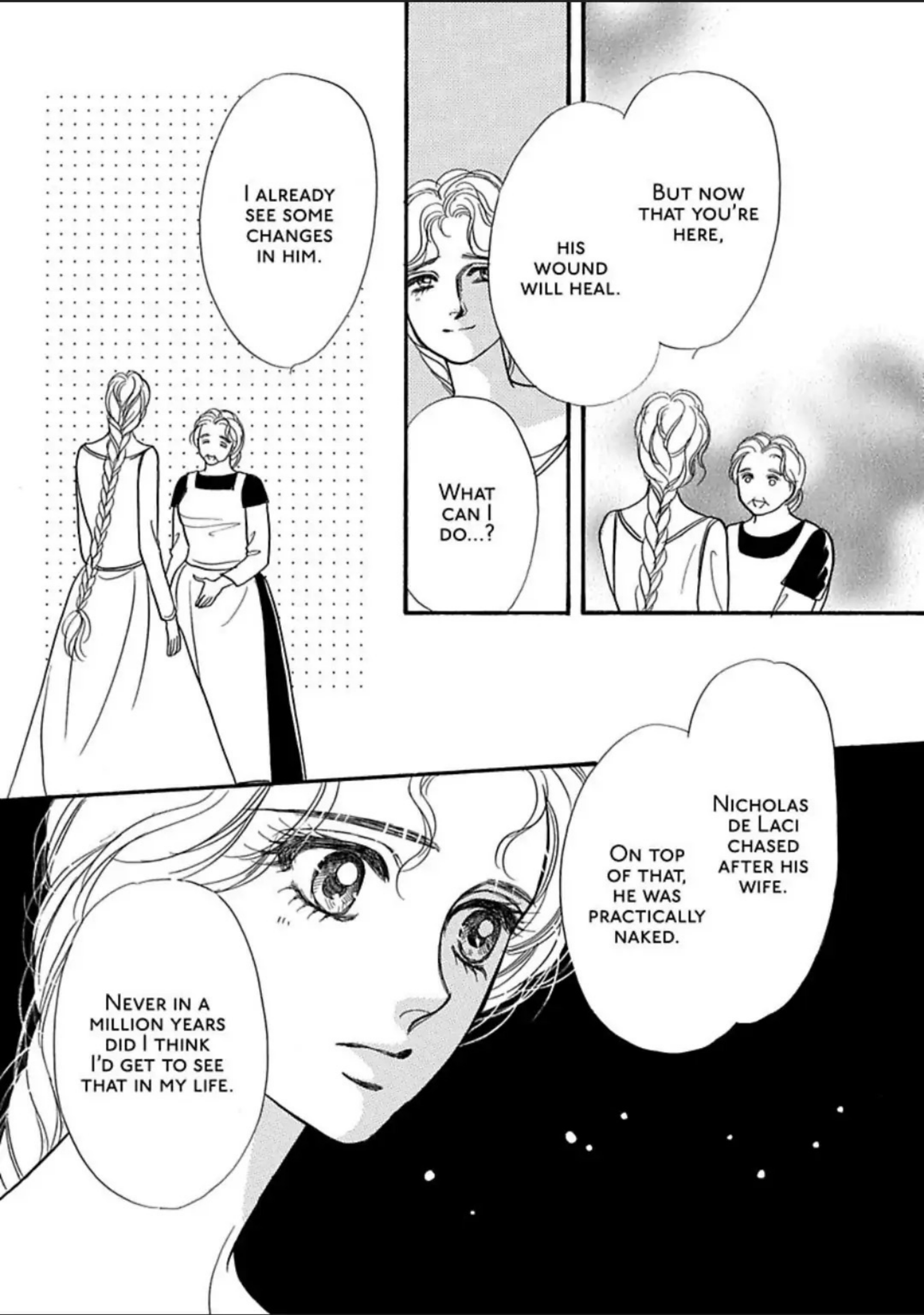

THIS IS NOT GOOD.
SPLASH
I CAN'T LET OTHER MEN SEE HER IN THAT.
WHERE IS SHE?

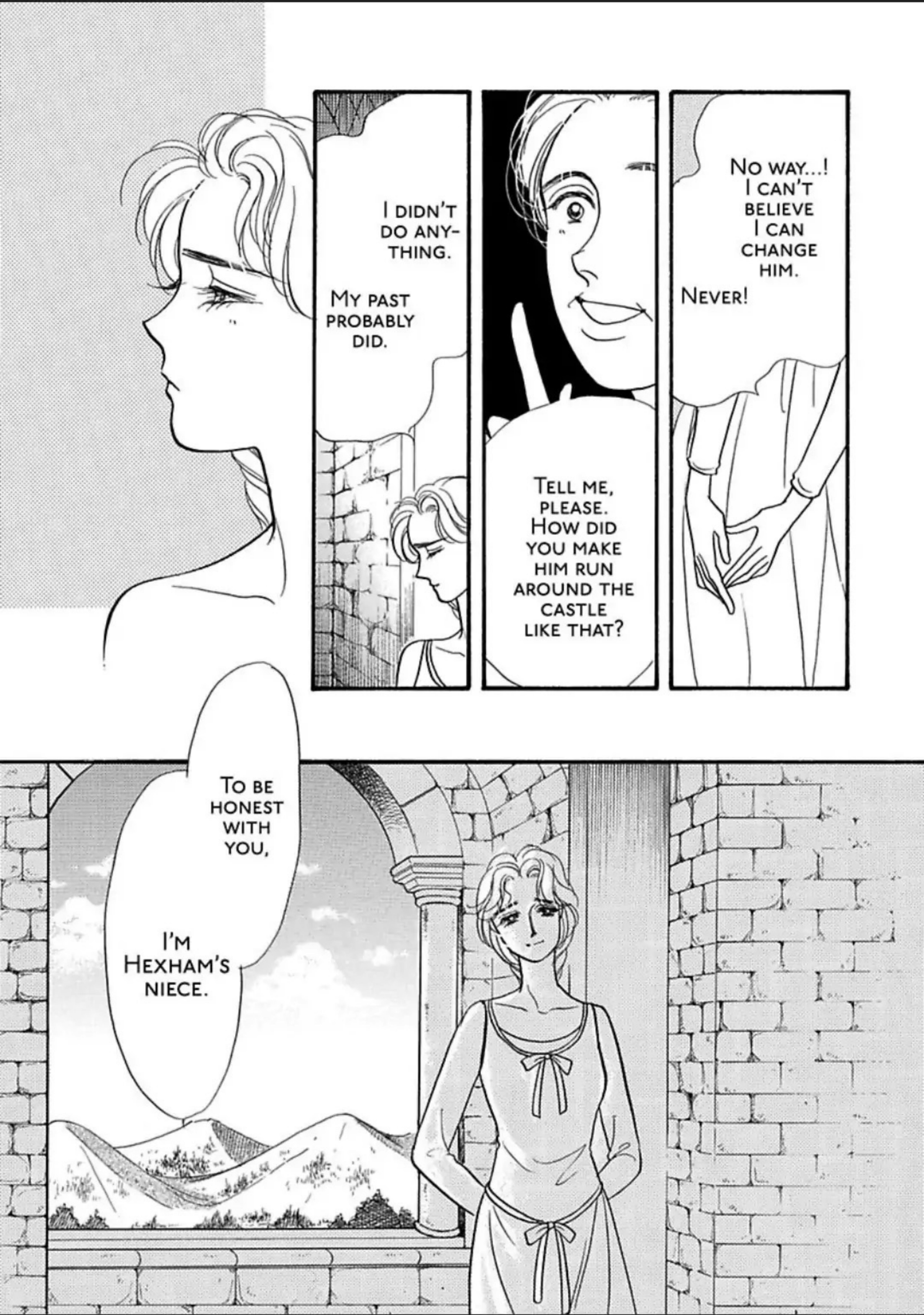

My lord!
SWAF

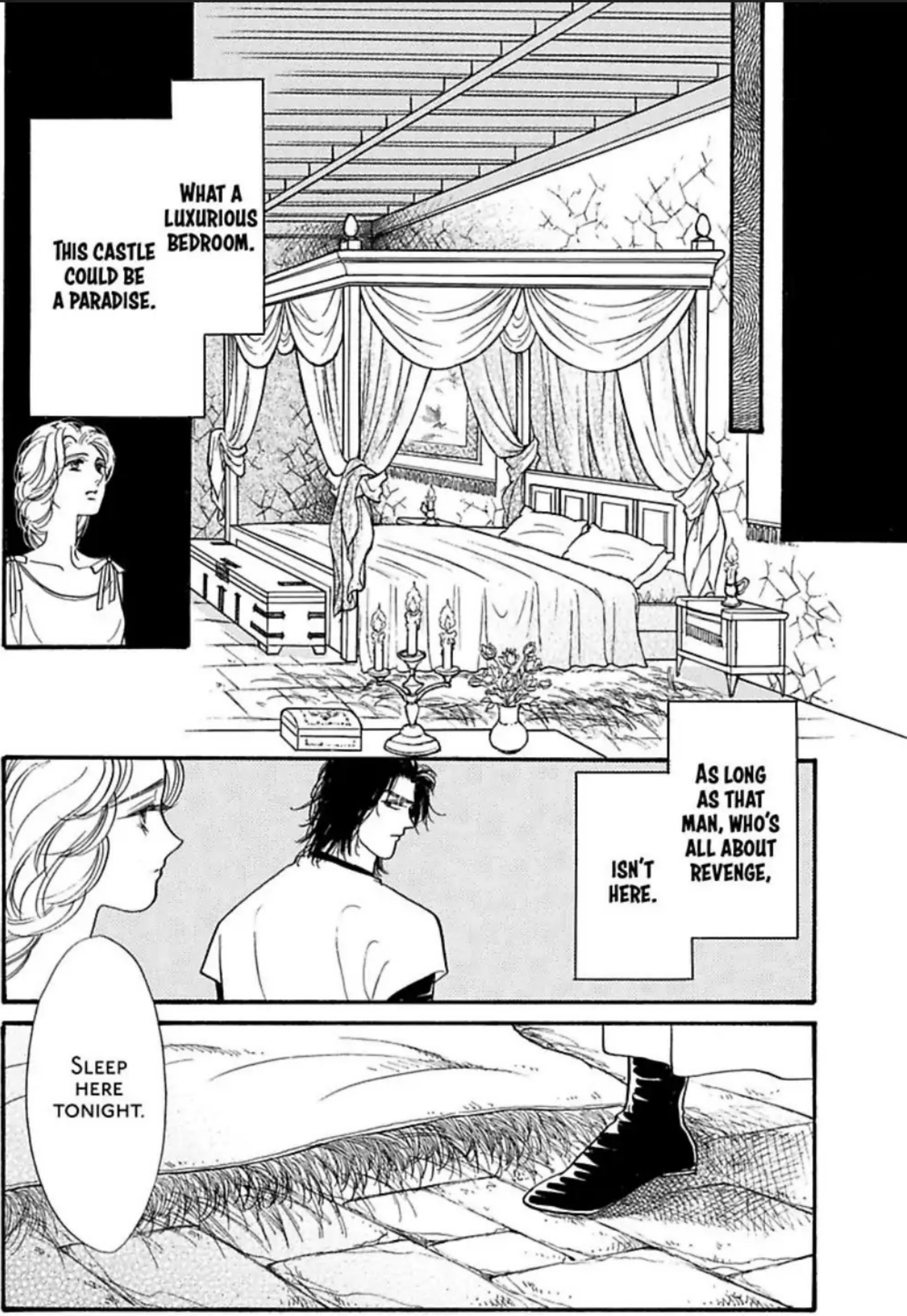

My lord!
Why are you running around the castle looking like that?
My wife, come back to the room!

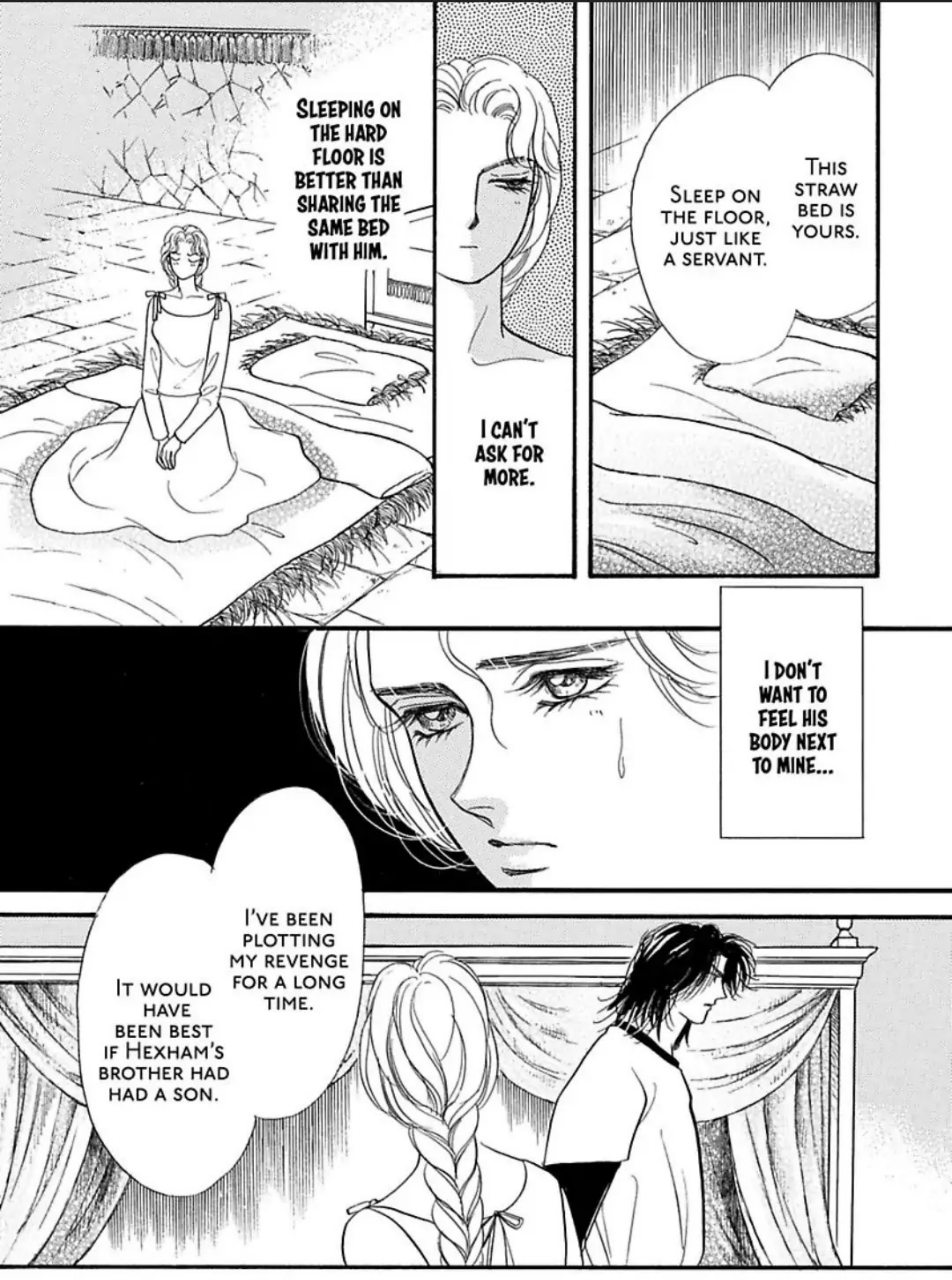

But you told me to go!
Don't talk back to me!
My lord, what's going on?
You! You should know your place.
You're the one who should go back to your room, my lord.
I can't believe you ran through the castle like that.
I'll be with the lady.
Fine. If anything happens to her, you'll be held accountable.
Also, make her wear something more decent.
She isn't a child anymore!
SLAM

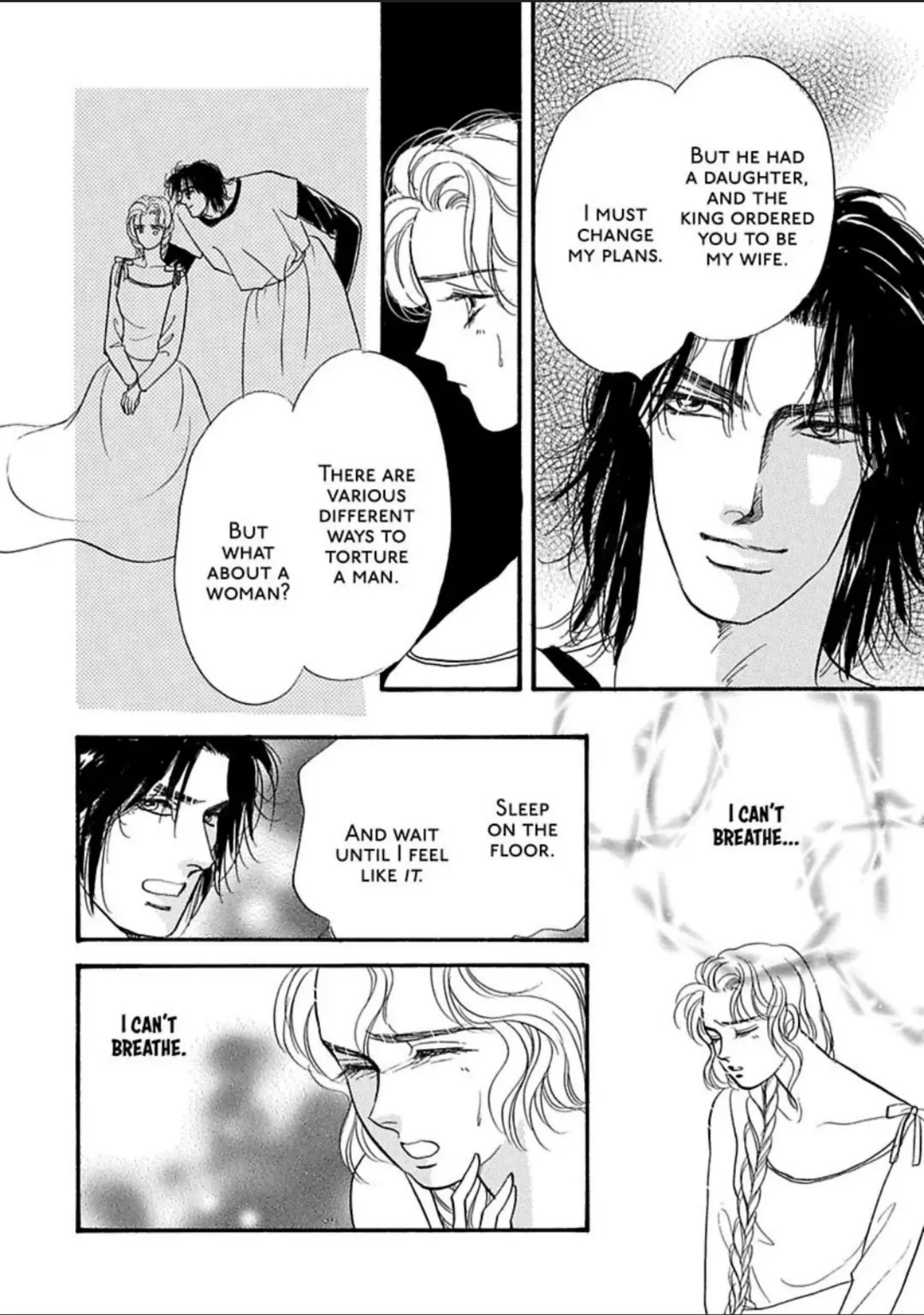

Aren't you scared of him?
I've known him since he was a baby.
I first served his mother, and after her passing, I attended to her daughter, Miss Aisely.
Aisley...? Is she his sister?
I haven't introduced myself yet.
My name is Edith.
I've lived in Belvry since I was a little girl.
She's married now, and she doesn't live here anymore.
Baron Nicholas isn't a bad person at all.
I heard he'd gone through a horrible time at the Holy Land when he was younger.
He's changed since then...
Especially since the incident with Hexham.

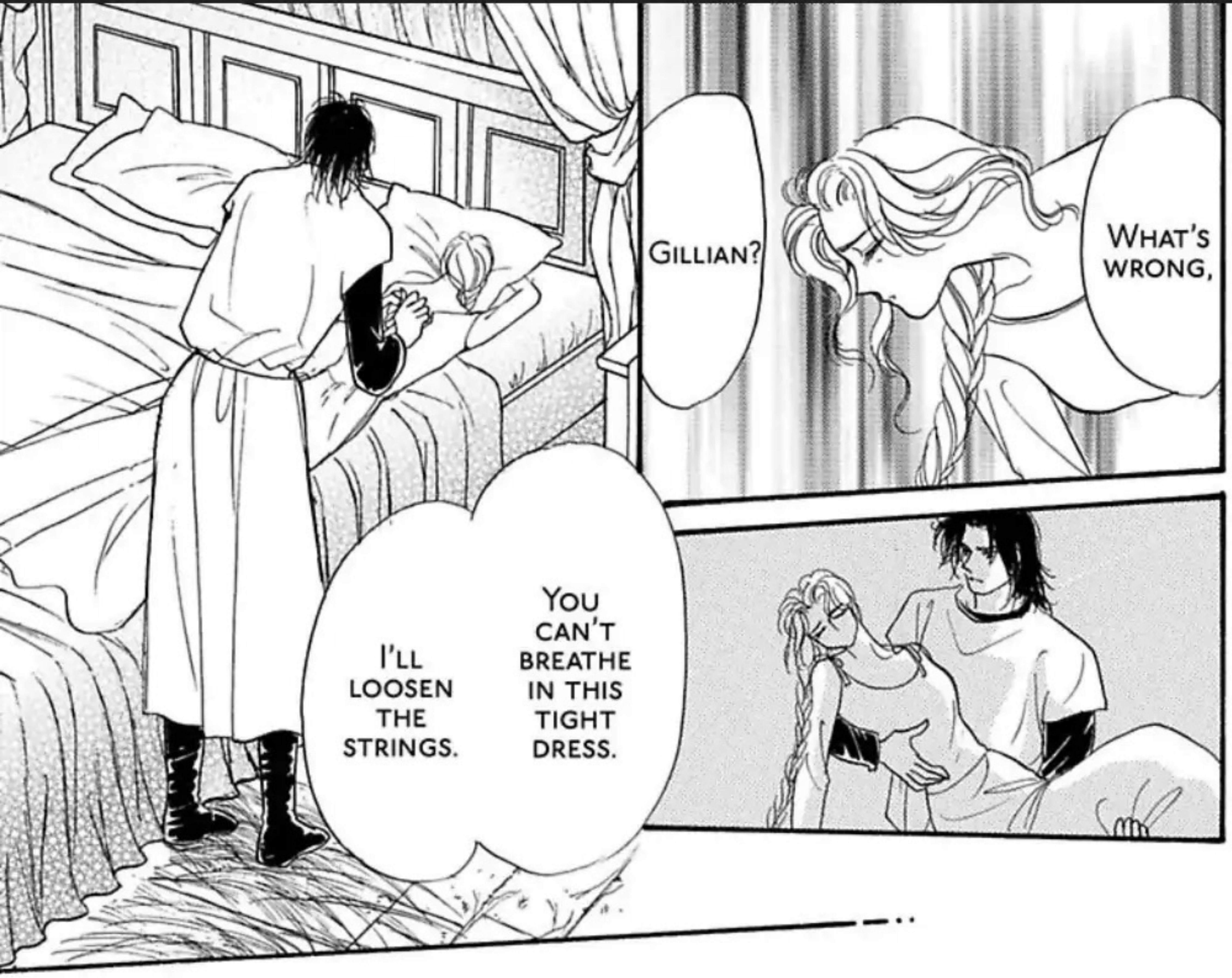

But now that you're here,
his wound will heal.
What can I do...?
I already see some changes in him.
Nicholas de Laci chased after his wife.
On top of that, he was practically naked.
Never in a million years did I think I'd get to see that in my life.

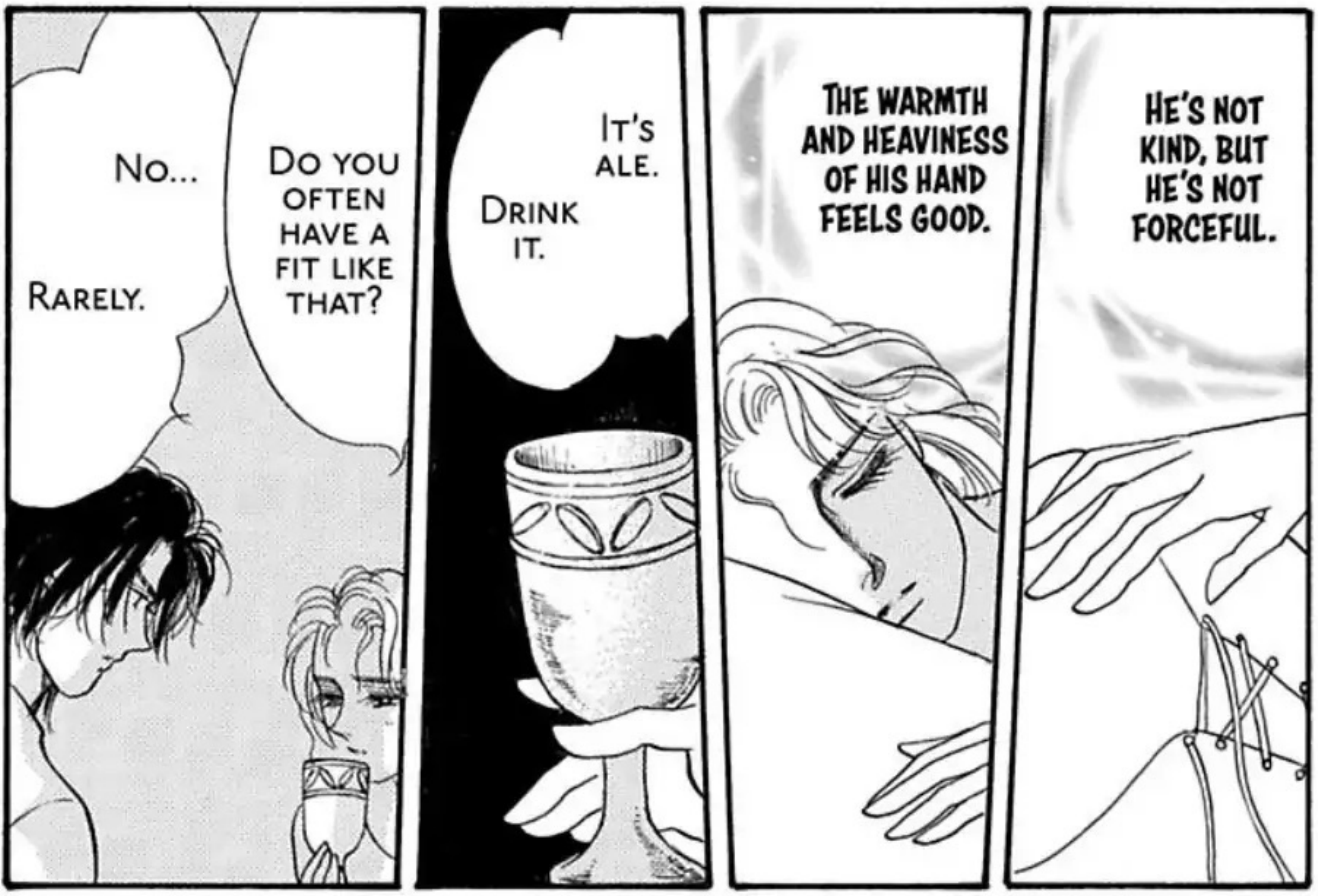

No way...! I can't believe I can change him.
Never!
Tell me, please. How did you make him run around the castle like that?
I didn't do anything.
My past probably did.
To be honest with you,
I'm Hexham's niece.

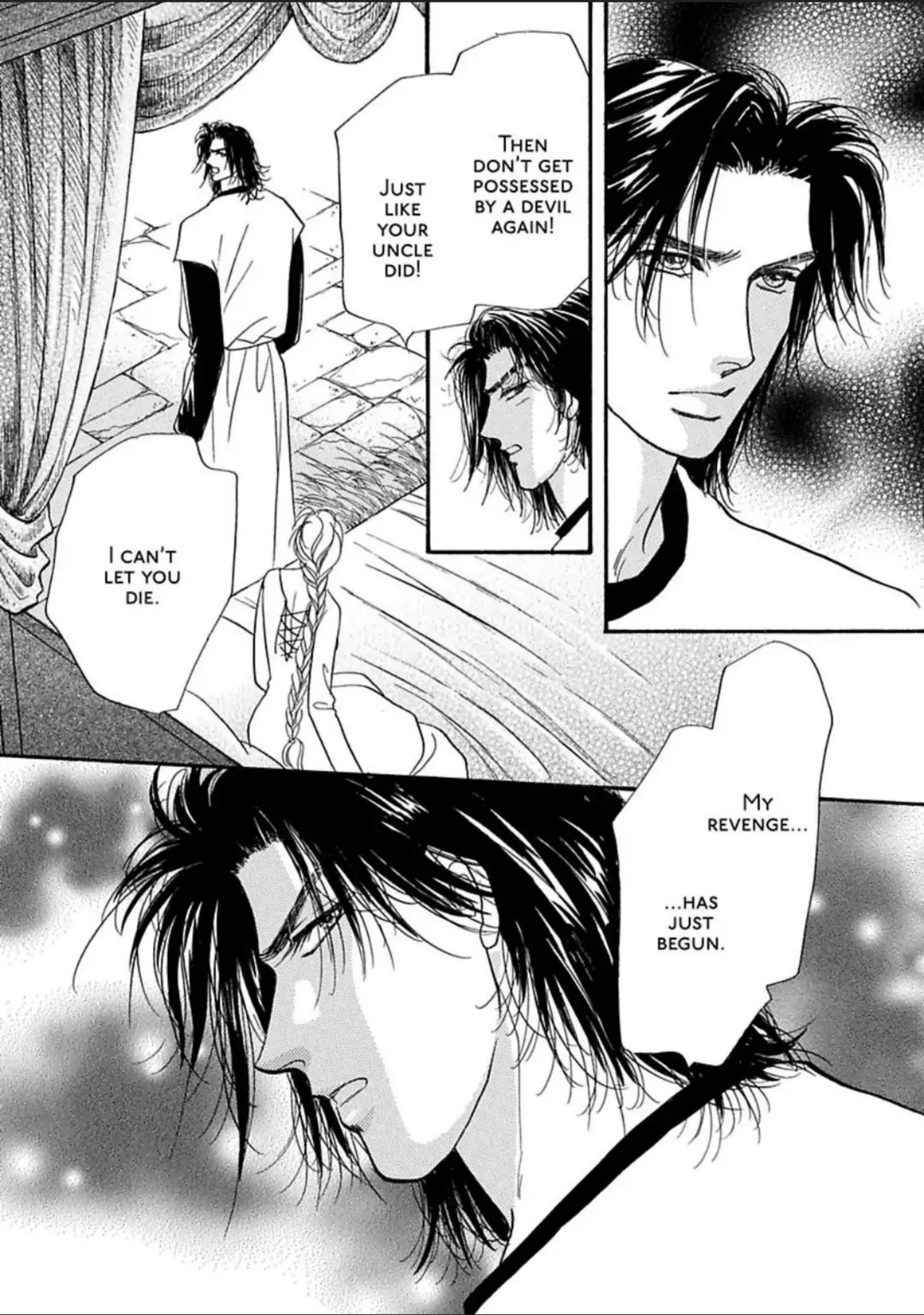

WHAT A LUXURIOUS BEDROOM.
THIS CASTLE COULD BE A PARADISE.
AS LONG AS THAT MAN, WHO'S ALL ABOUT REVENGE,
ISN'T HERE.
Sleep here tonight.

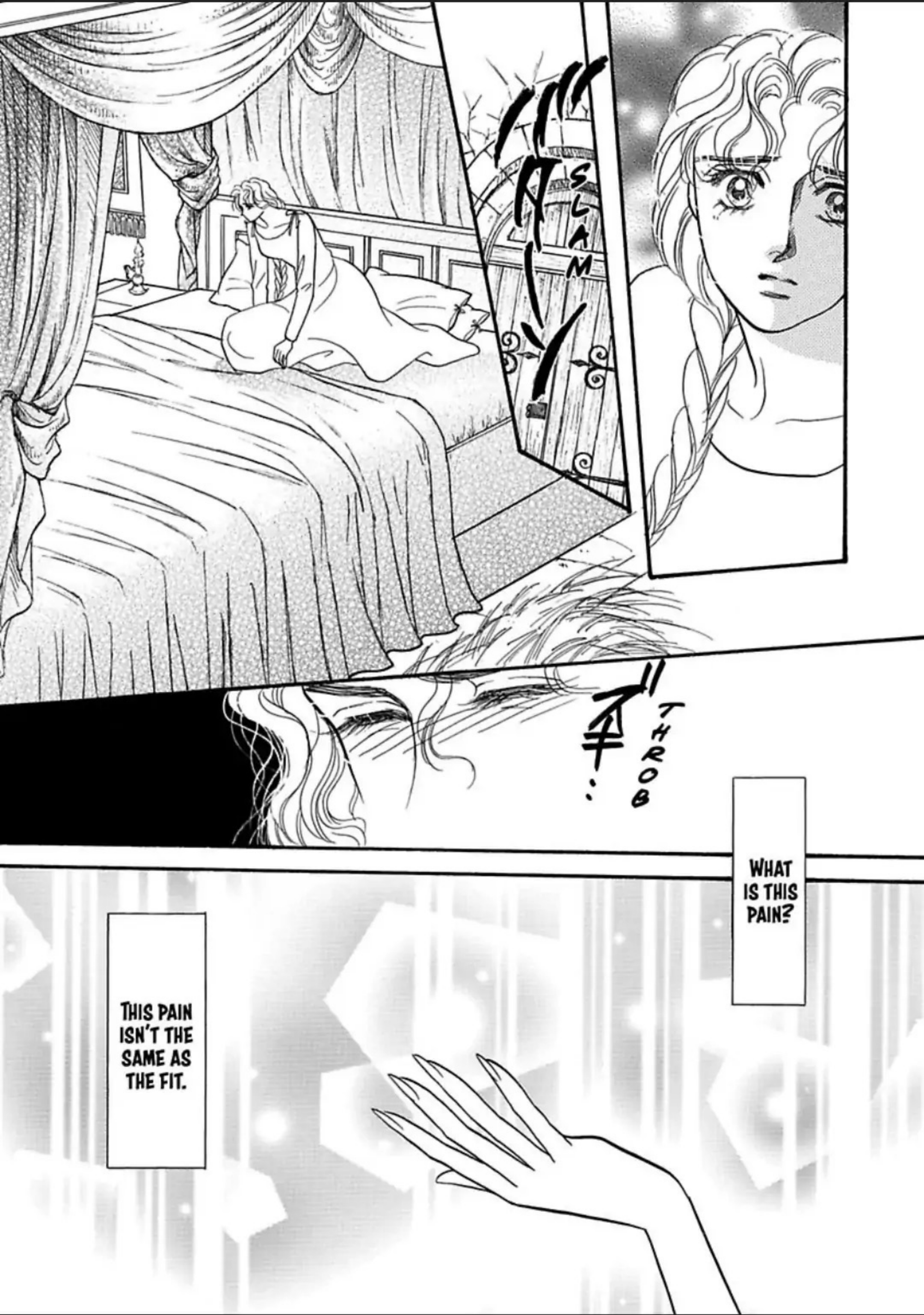

This straw bed is yours.
Sleep on the floor, just like a servant.
I can't ask for more.
Sleeping on the hard floor is better than sharing the same bed with him.
I don't want to feel his body next to mine...
I've been plotting my revenge for a long time.
It would have been best if Hexham's brother had had a son.

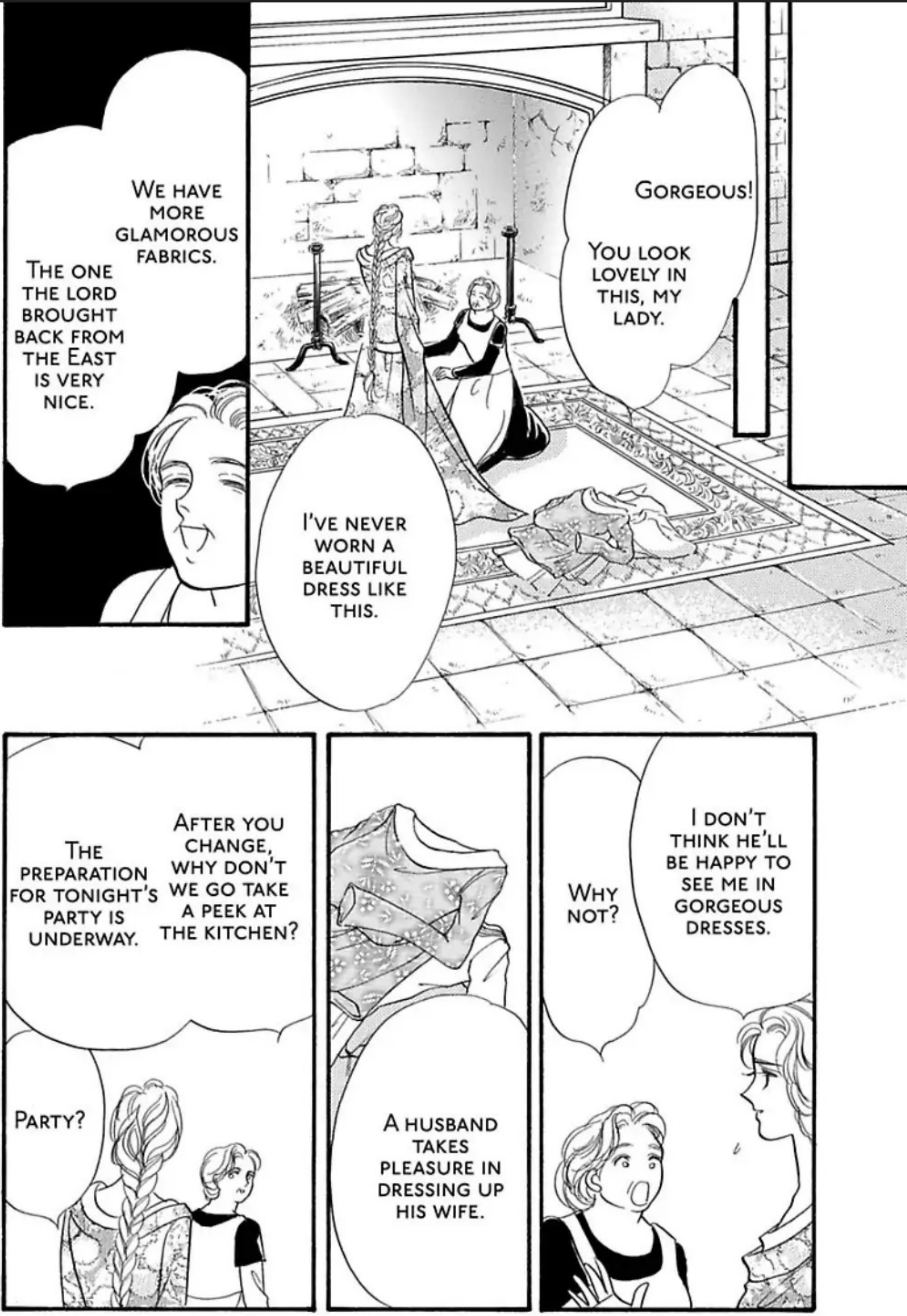

But he had a daughter, and the king ordered you to be my wife.
I must change my plans.
There are various different ways to torture a man.
But what about a woman?
Sleep on the floor.
And wait until I feel like *it*.
I can't breathe...
I can't breathe.

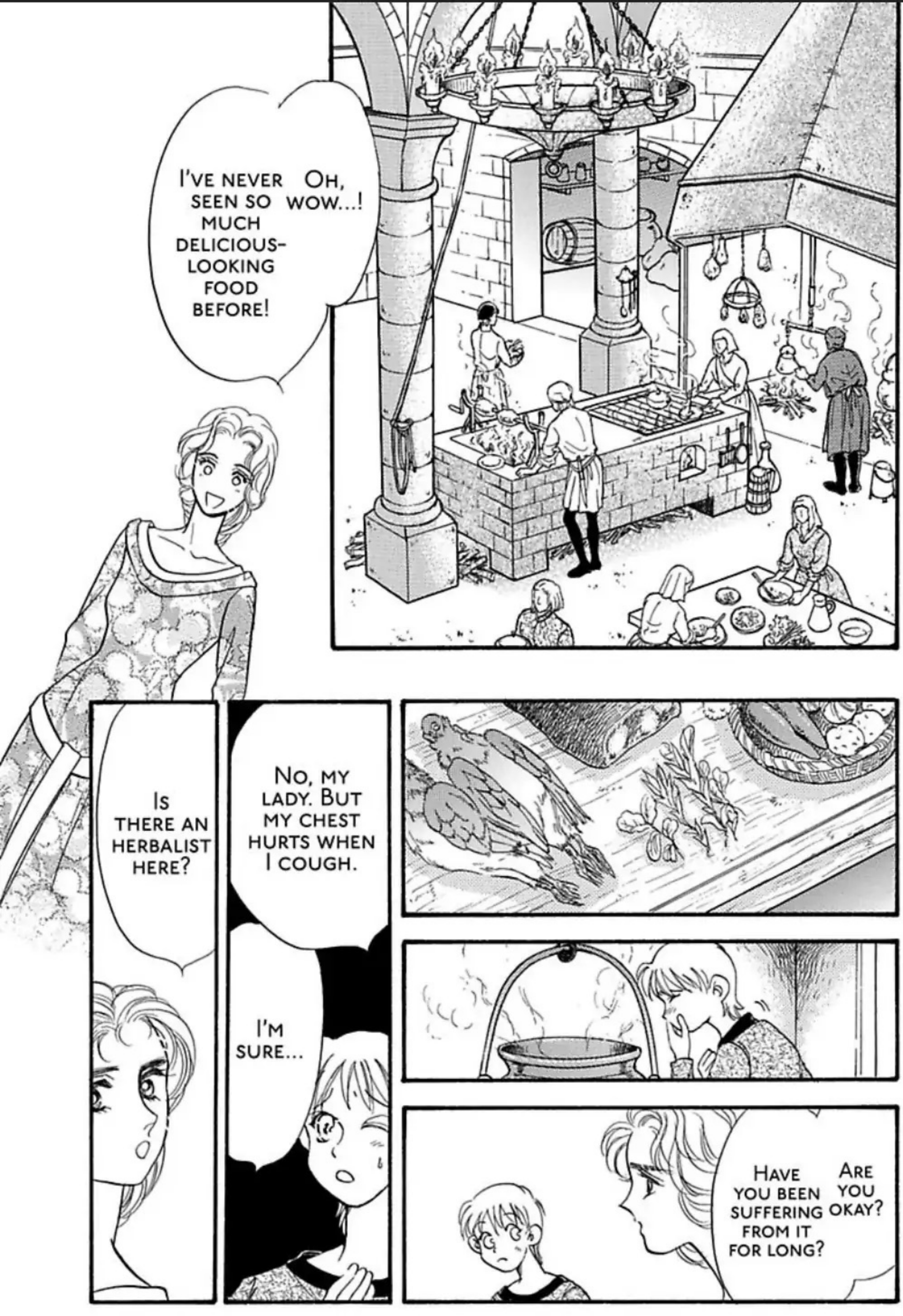

What's wrong,
Gillian?
You can't breathe in this tight dress.
I'll loosen the strings.

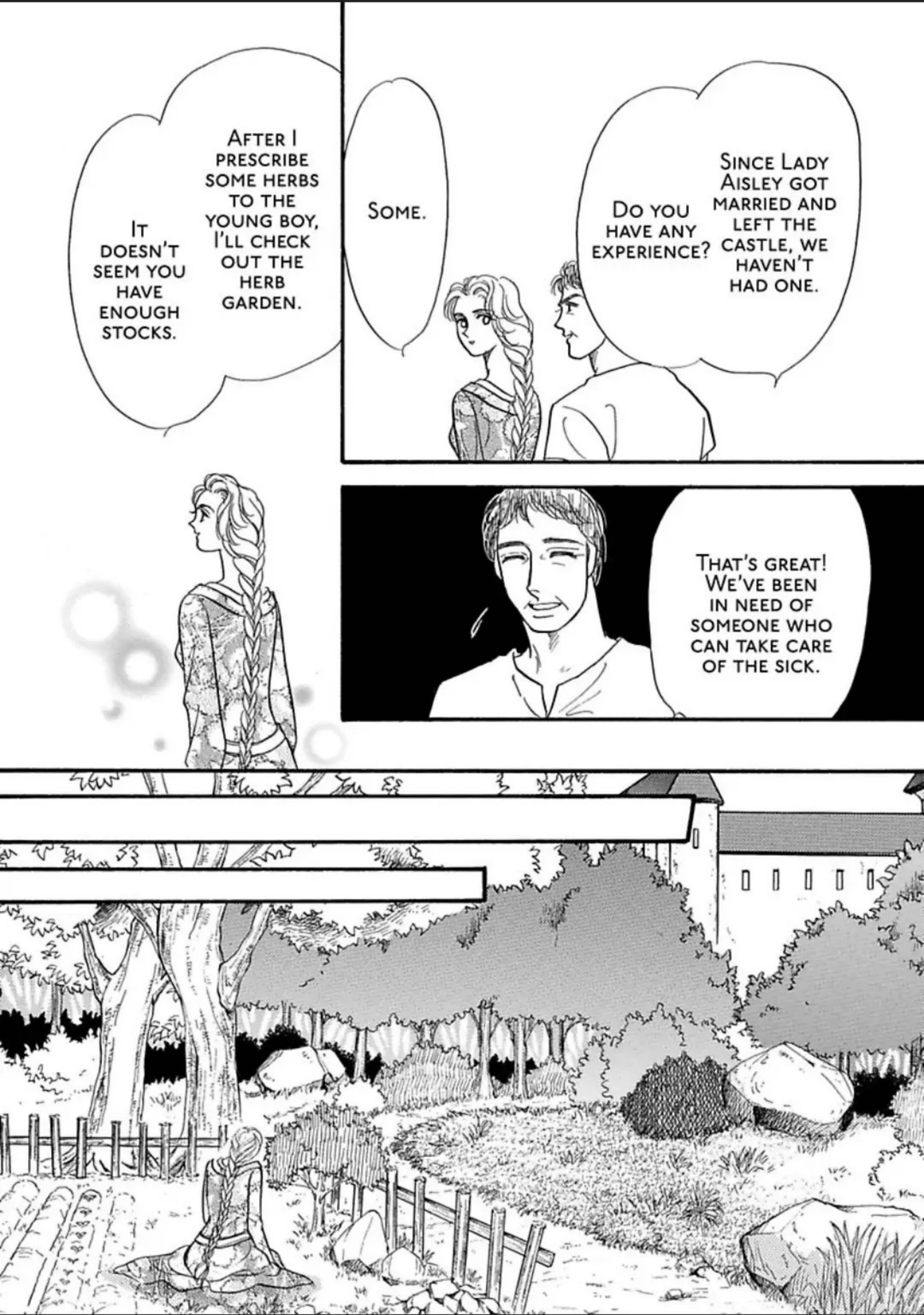

He's not kind, but he's not forceful.
The warmth and heaviness of his hand feels good.
It's ale.
Drink it.
Do you often have a fit like that?
No...
Rarely.

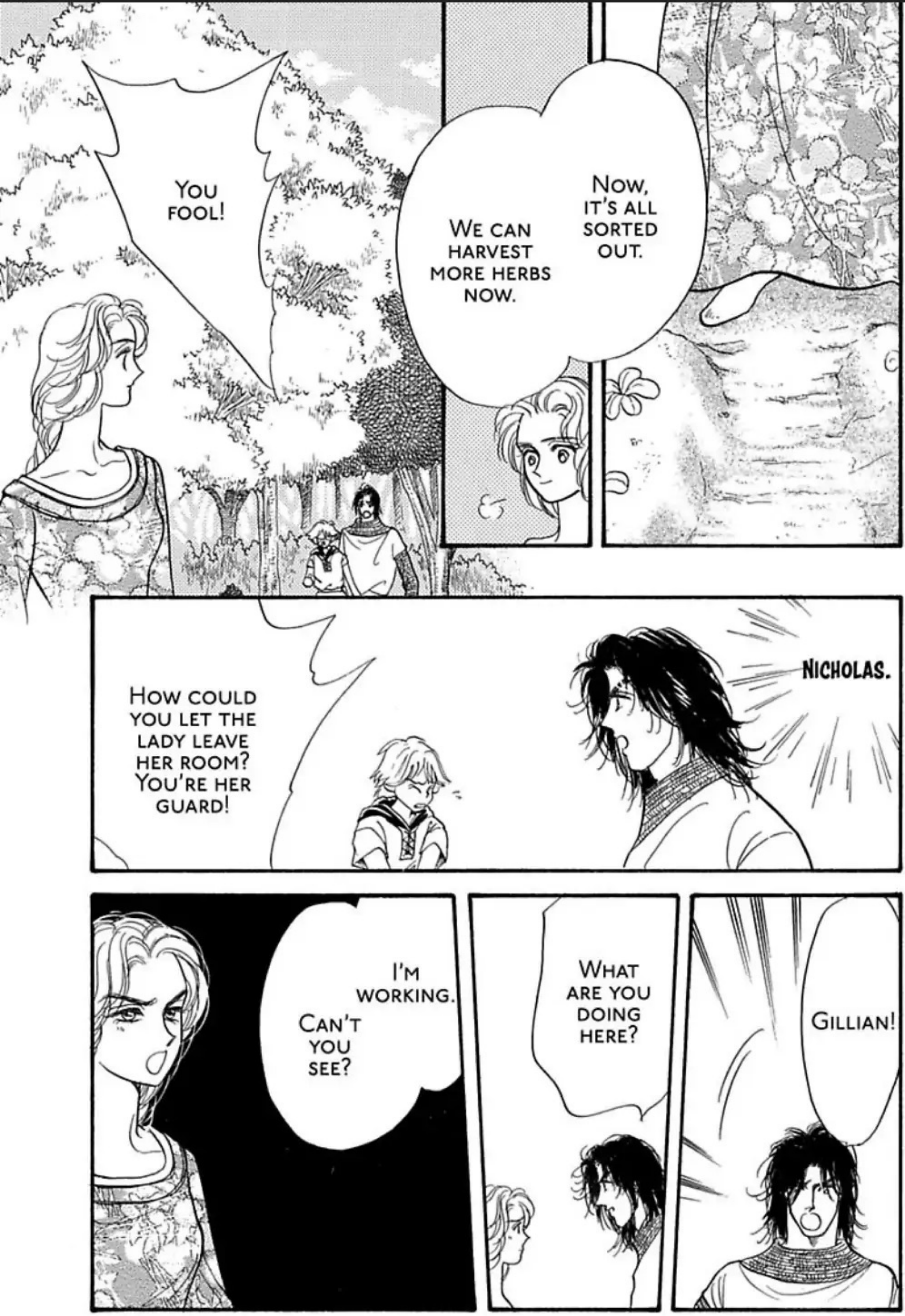

Then don't get possessed by a devil again!
Just like your uncle did!
I can't let you die.
My revenge...
...has just begun.

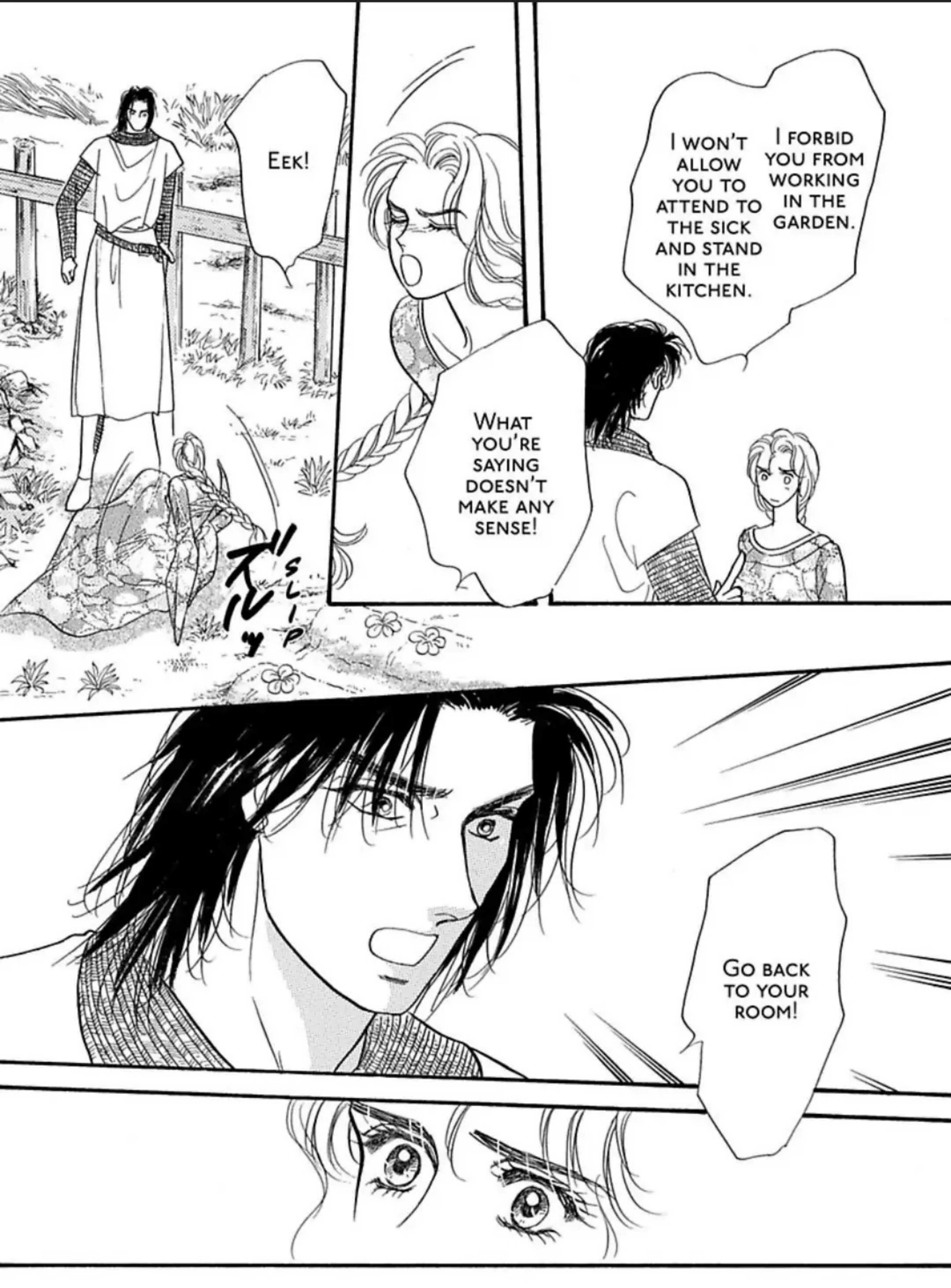

バターン
SLAM
ズキ…
THROB
WHAT IS THIS PAIN?
THIS PAIN ISN'T THE SAME AS THE FIT.

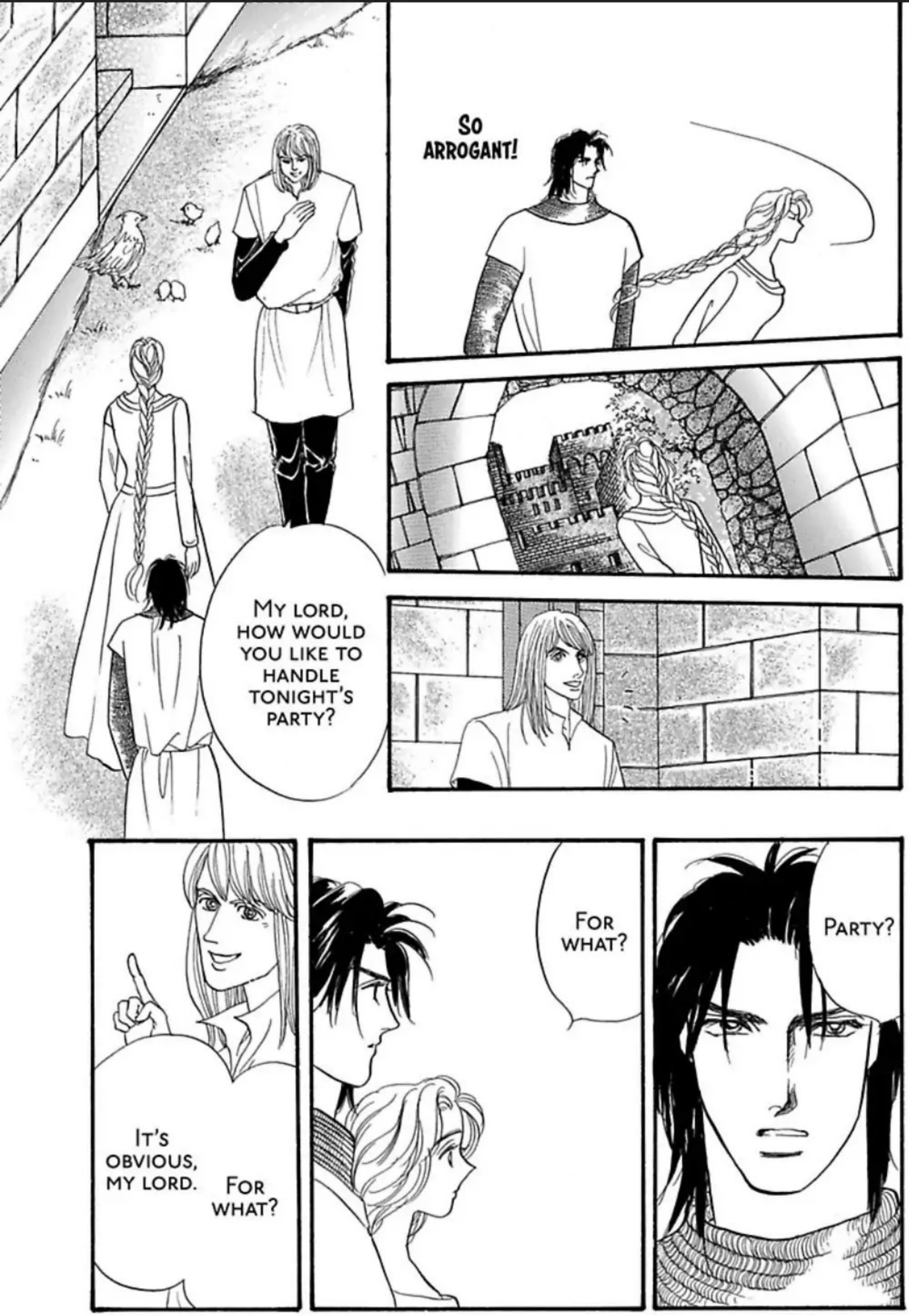

Gorgeous!
You look lovely in this, my lady.
I've never worn a beautiful dress like this.
We have more glamorous fabrics.
The one the lord brought back from the East is very nice.
I don't think he'll be happy to see me in gorgeous dresses.
Why not?
A husband takes pleasure in dressing up his wife.
After you change, why don't we go take a peek at the kitchen?
The preparation for tonight's party is underway.
Party?

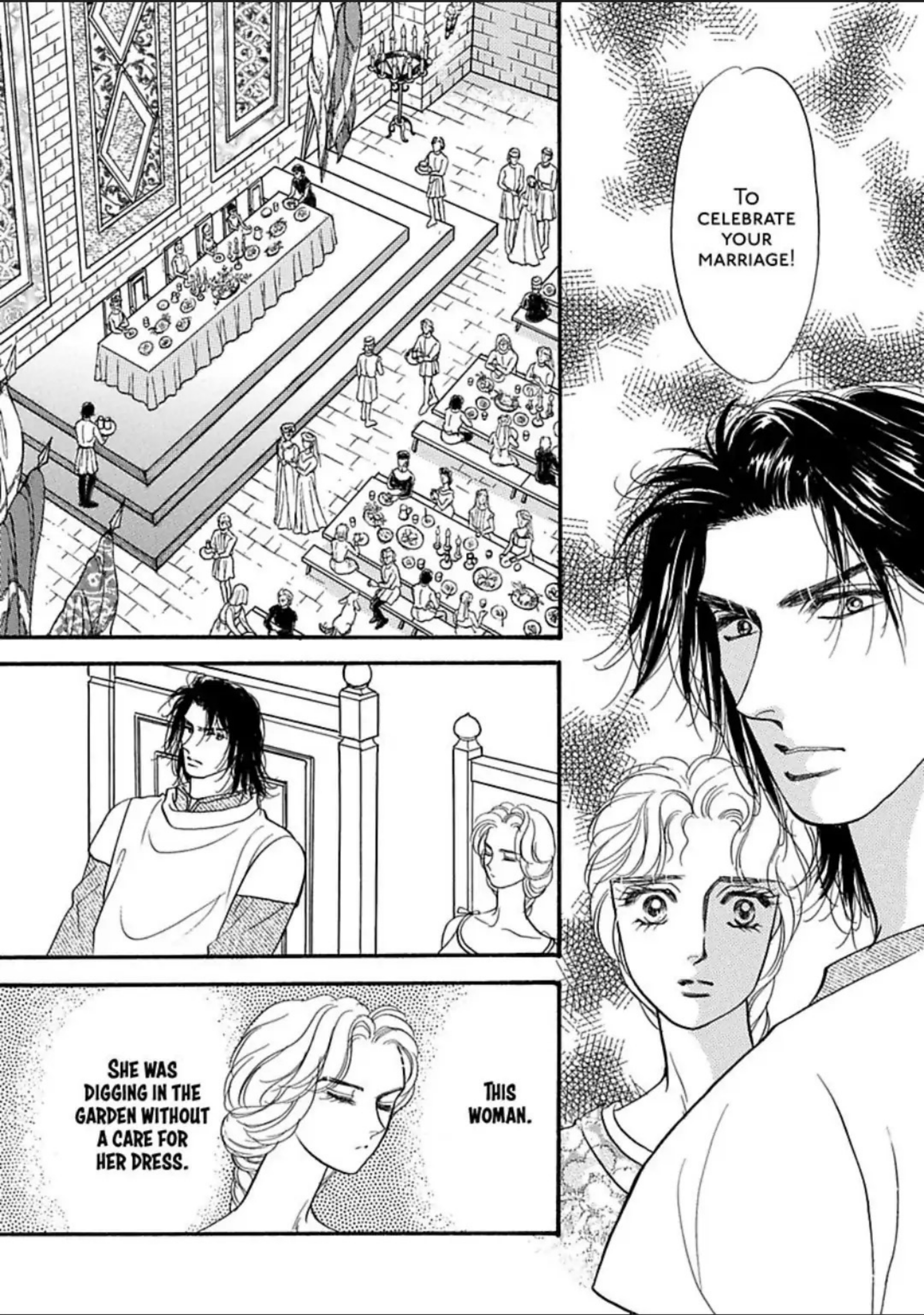

Oh, wow...!
I've never seen so much delicious-looking food before!
Are you okay?
Have you been suffering from it for long?
No, my lady. But my chest hurts when I cough.
I'm sure...
Is there an herbalist here?

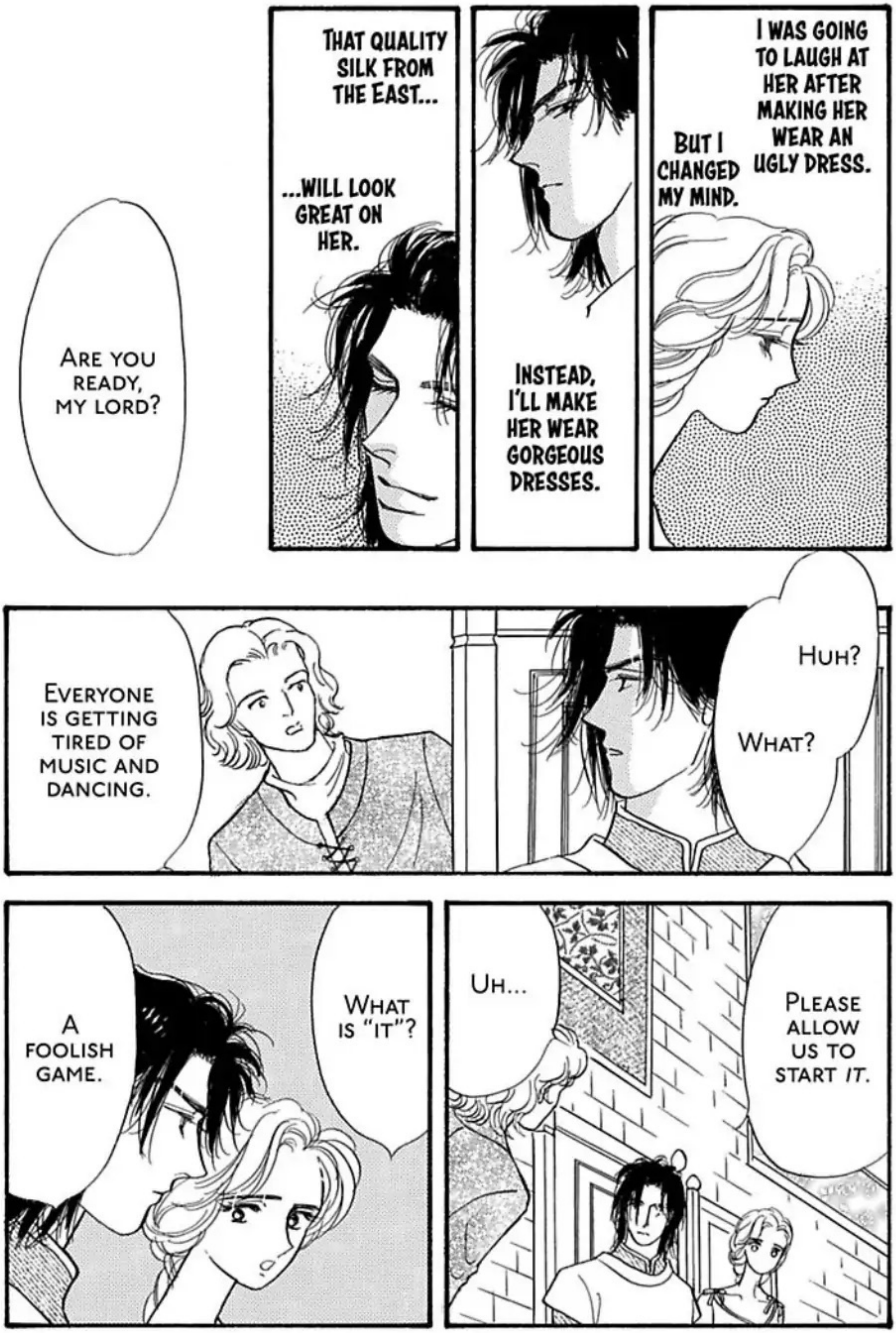

Since Lady Aisley got married and left the castle, we haven't had one.
Do you have any experience?
Some.
That's great! We've been in need of someone who can take care of the sick.
After I prescribe some herbs to the young boy, I'll check out the herb garden.
It doesn't seem you have enough stocks.

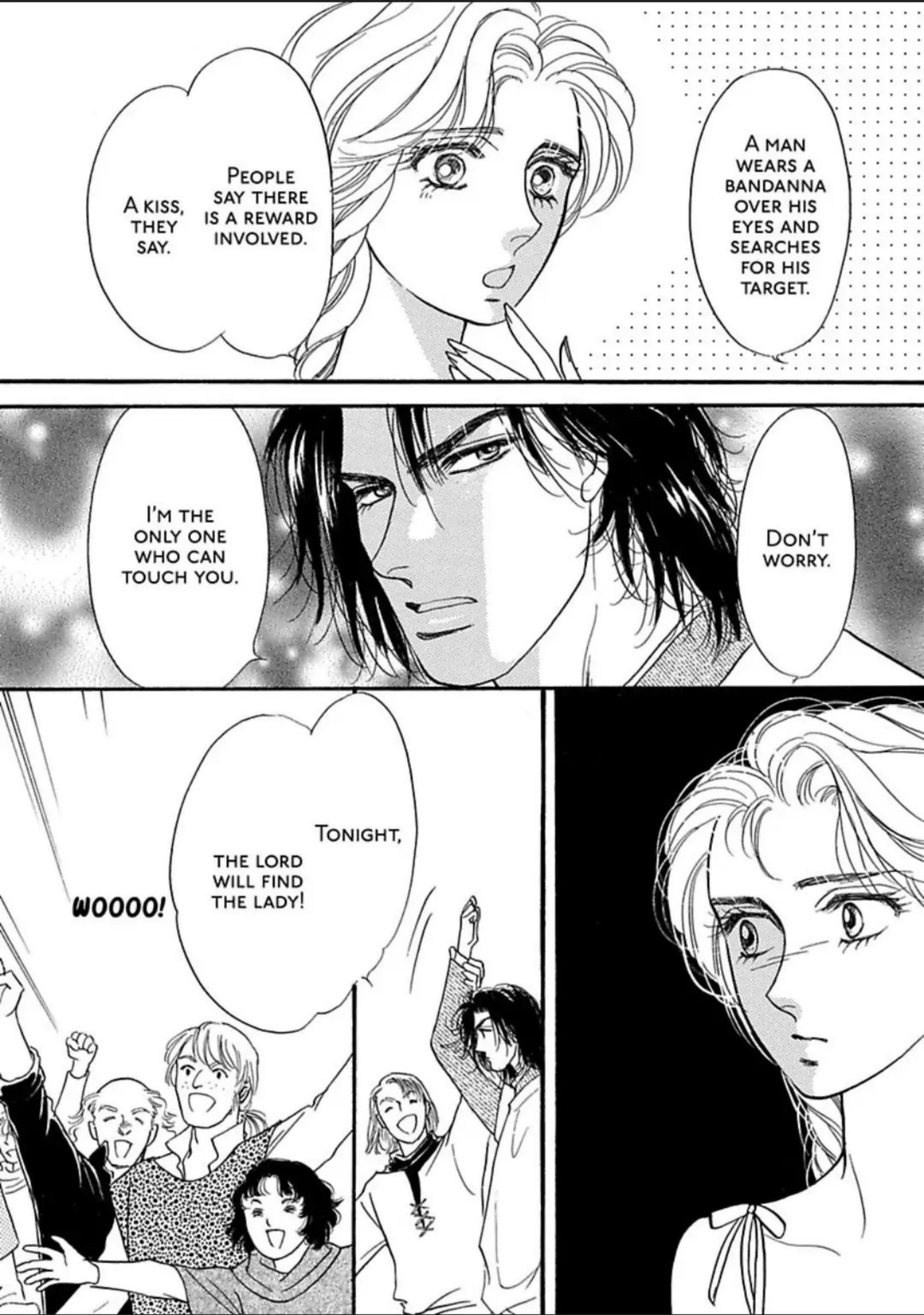

Now, it's all sorted out.
We can harvest more herbs now.
You fool!
Nicholas.
How could you let the lady leave her room? You're her guard!
Gillian!
What are you doing here?
I'm working.
Can't you see?

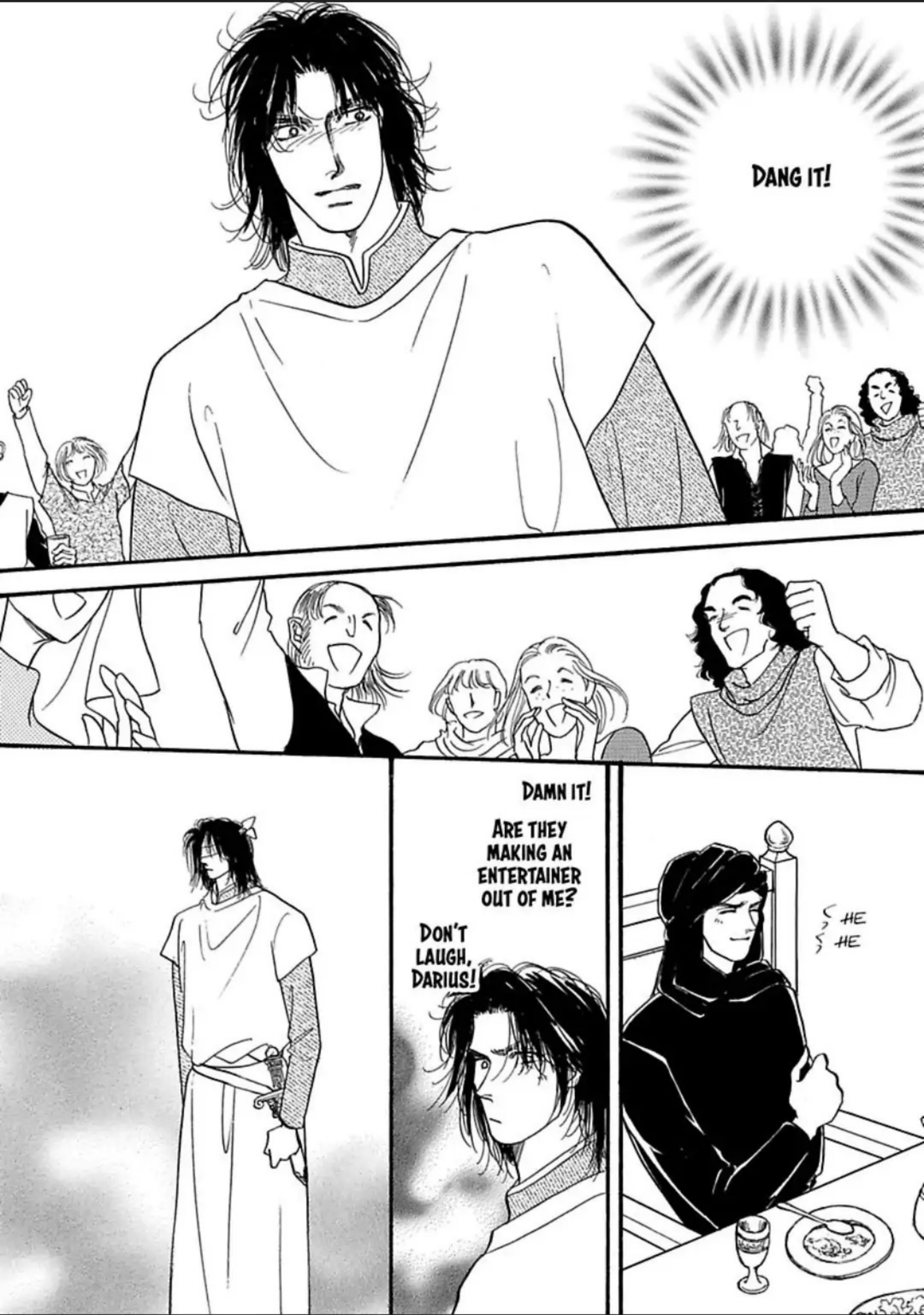

I forbid you from working in the garden.
I won't allow you to attend to the sick and stand in the kitchen.
What you're saying doesn't make any sense!
Eek!
ズルッ
SLIP
Go back to your room!

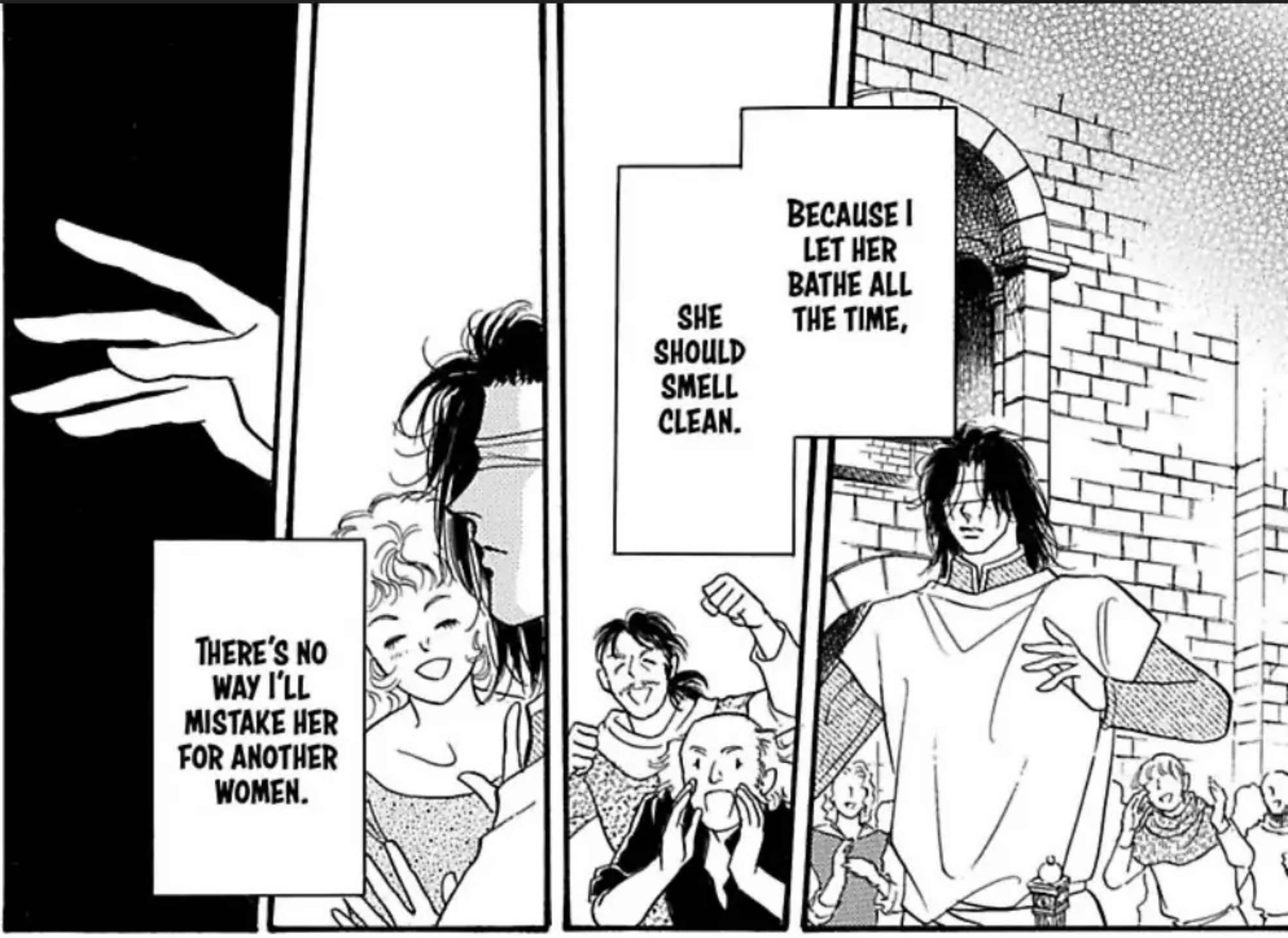

So arrogant!
My lord, how would you like to handle tonight's party?
Party?
For what?
It's obvious, my lord.
For what?

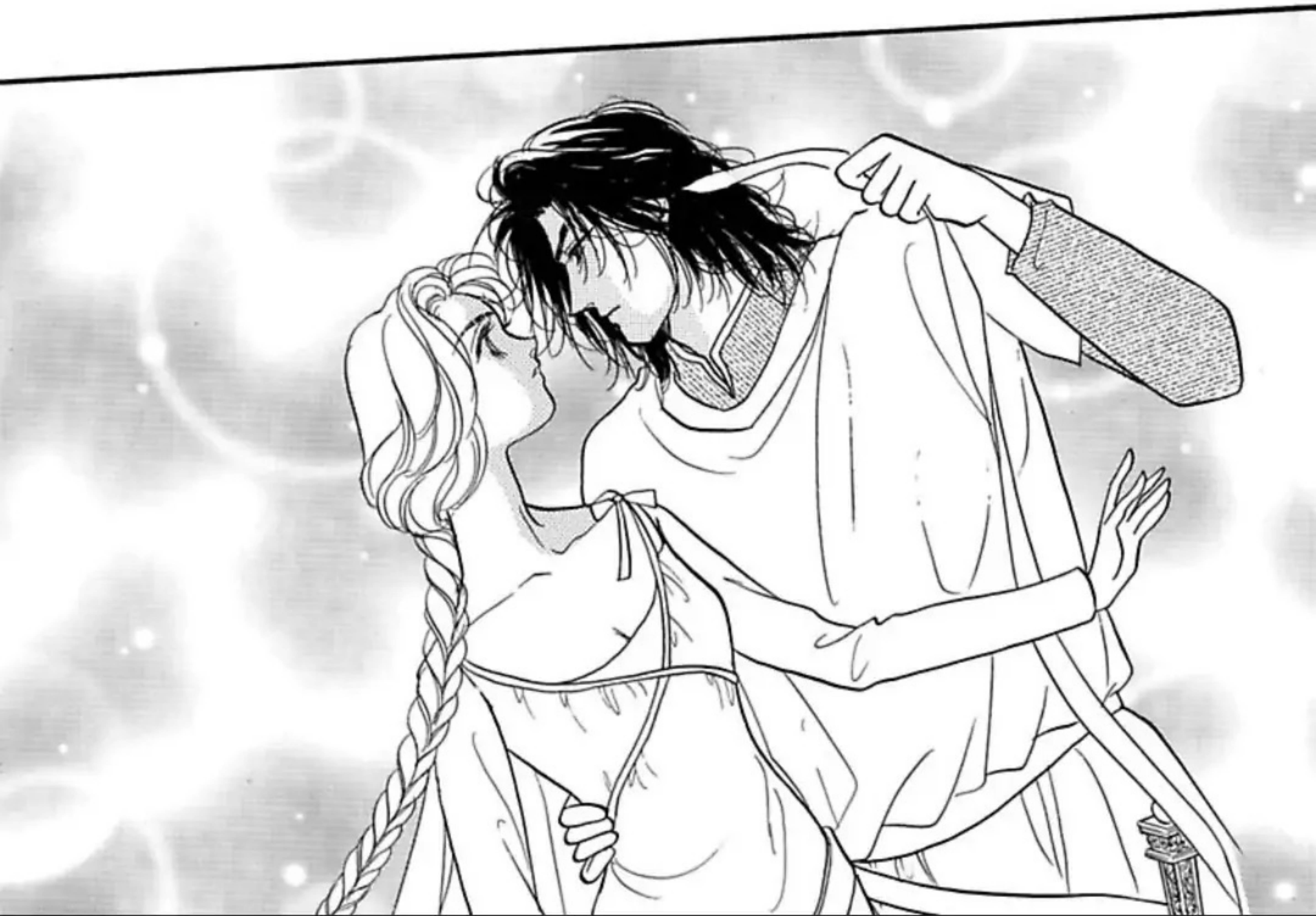

To celebrate your marriage!
This woman.
She was digging in the garden without a care for her dress.

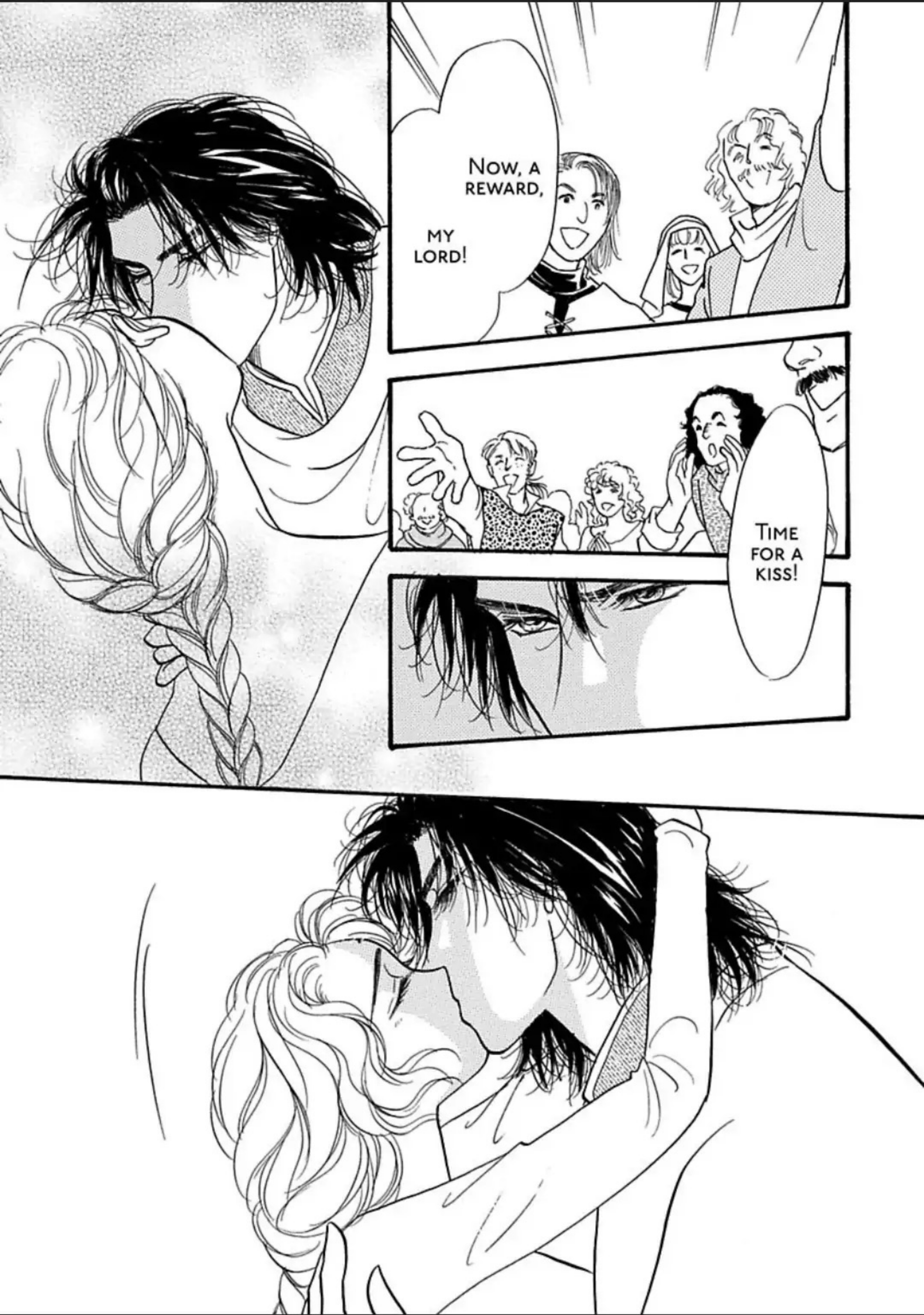

I was going to laugh at her after making her wear an ugly dress.
But I changed my mind.
Instead, I'll make her wear gorgeous dresses.
That quality silk from the East...
...will look great on her.
Are you ready, my lord?
Huh?
What?
Everyone is getting tired of music and dancing.
Please allow us to start *it*.
Uh...
What is "it"?
A foolish game.

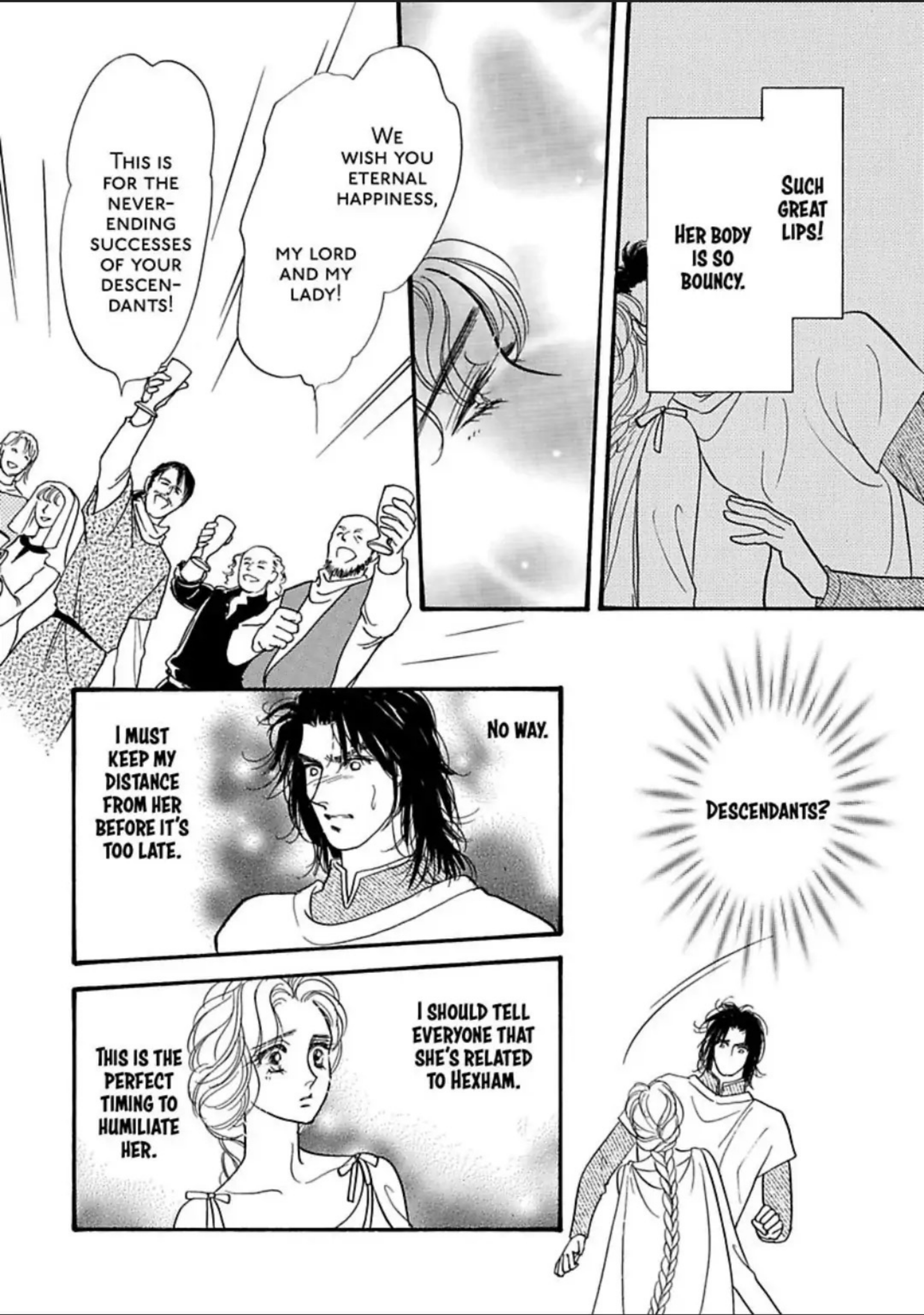

A man wears a bandanna over his eyes and searches for his target.
People say there is a reward involved.
A kiss, they say.
Don't worry.
I'm the only one who can touch you.
Tonight, the lord will find the lady!
WOOOO!

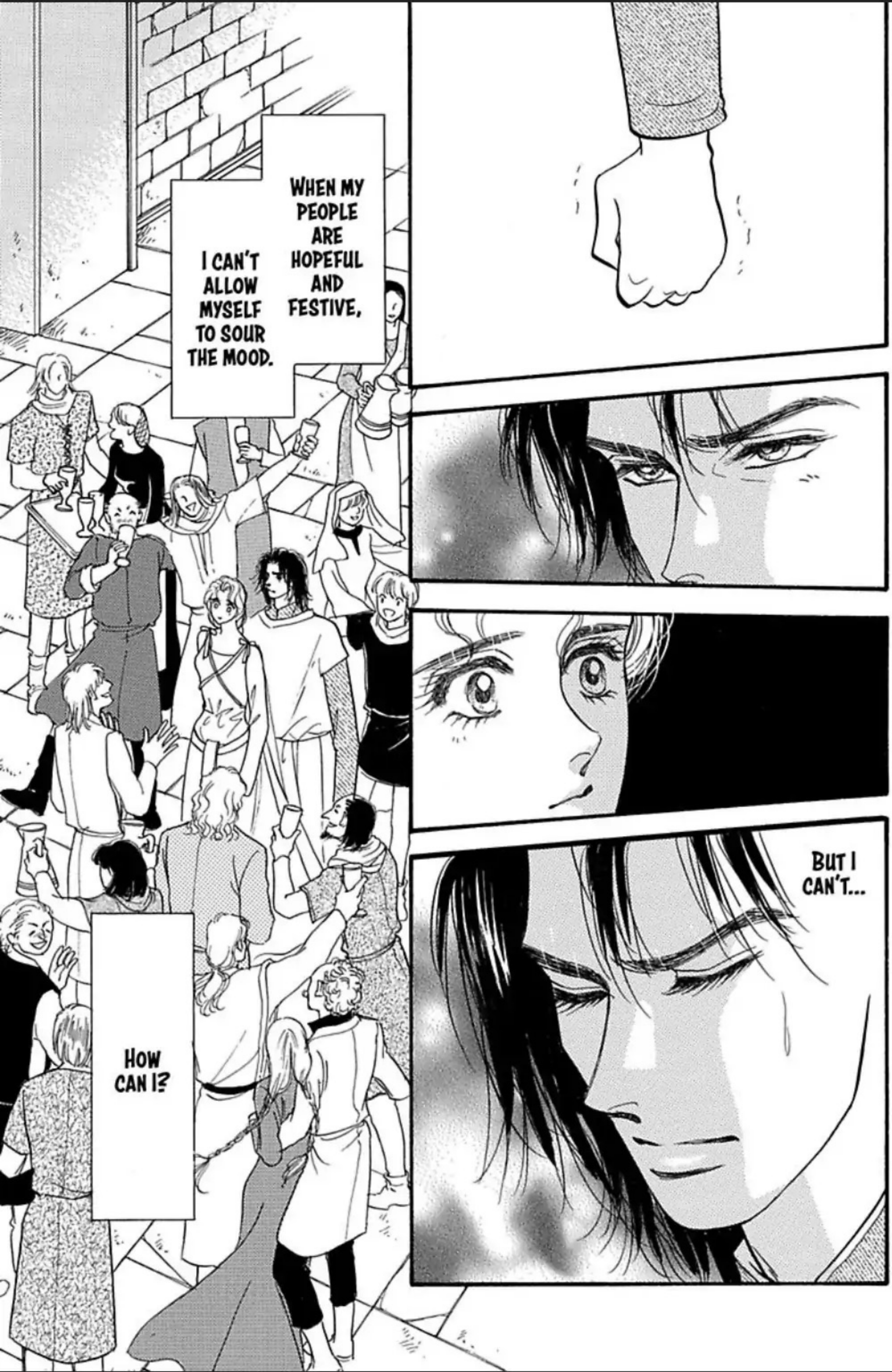

DANG IT!
HE HE
DAMN IT!
ARE THEY MAKING AN ENTERTAINER OUT OF ME?
DON'T LAUGH, DARIUS!

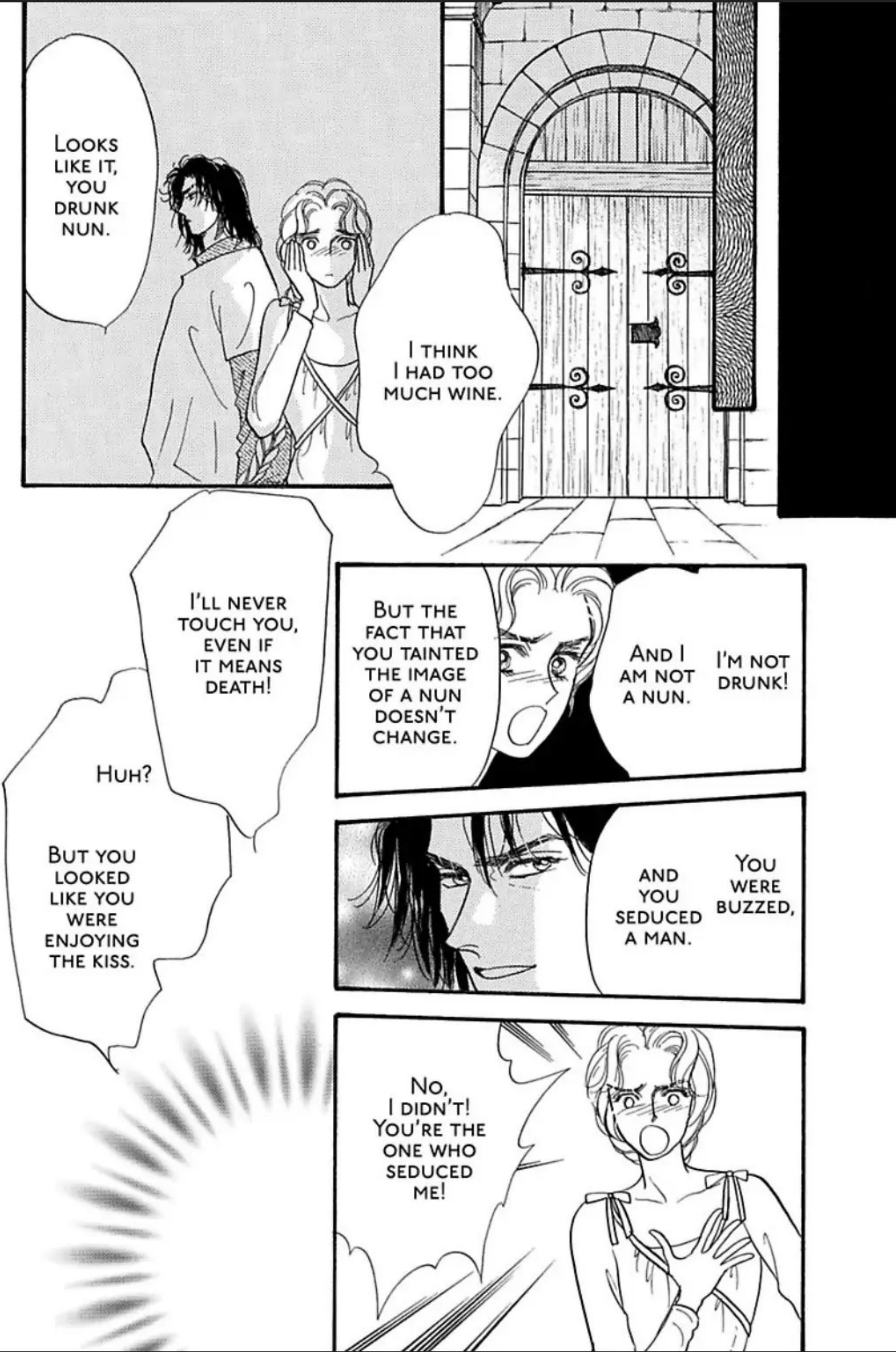

BECAUSE I LET HER BATHE ALL THE TIME,
SHE SHOULD SMELL CLEAN.
THERE'S NO WAY I'LL MISTAKE HER FOR ANOTHER WOMEN.

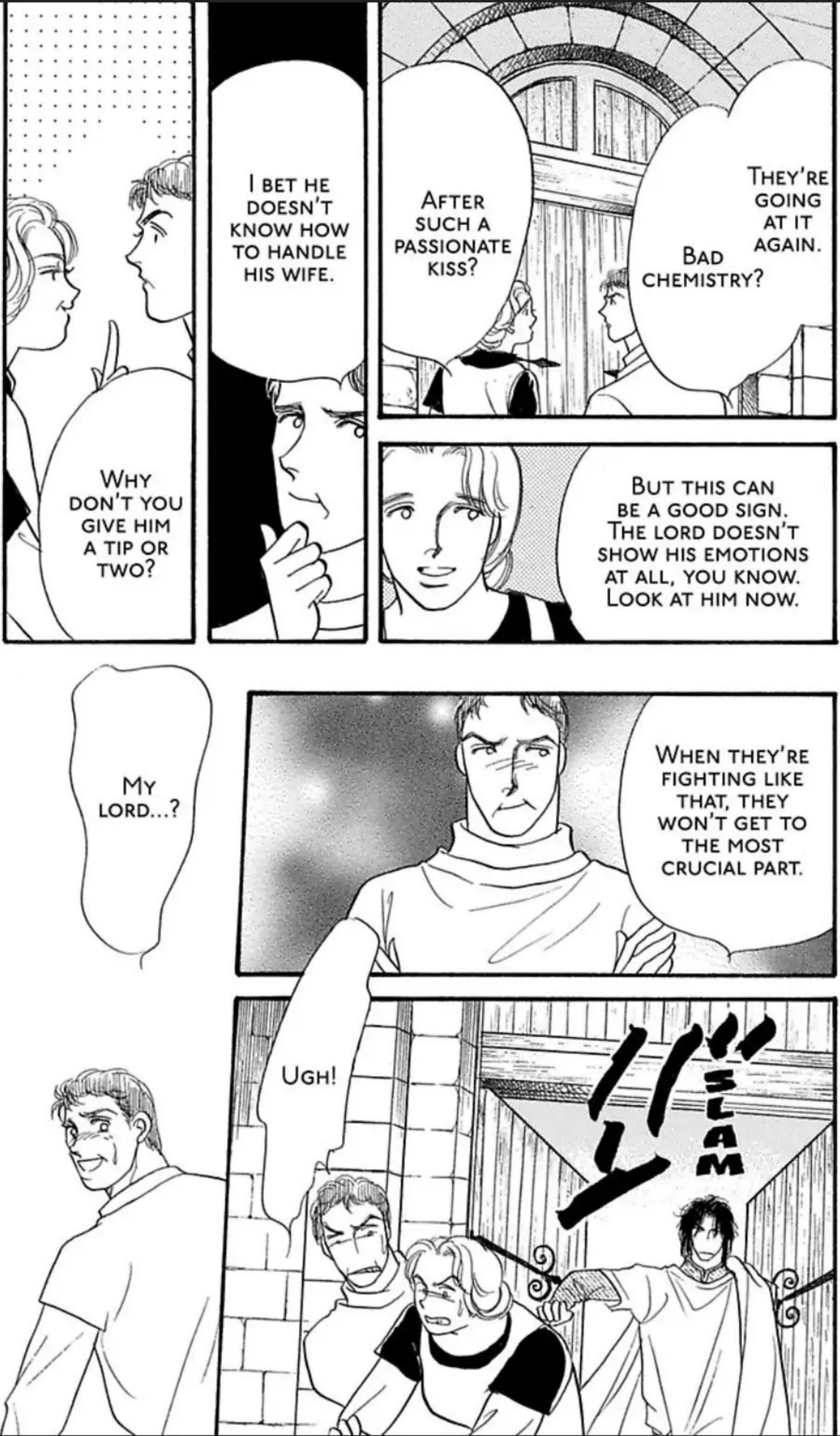


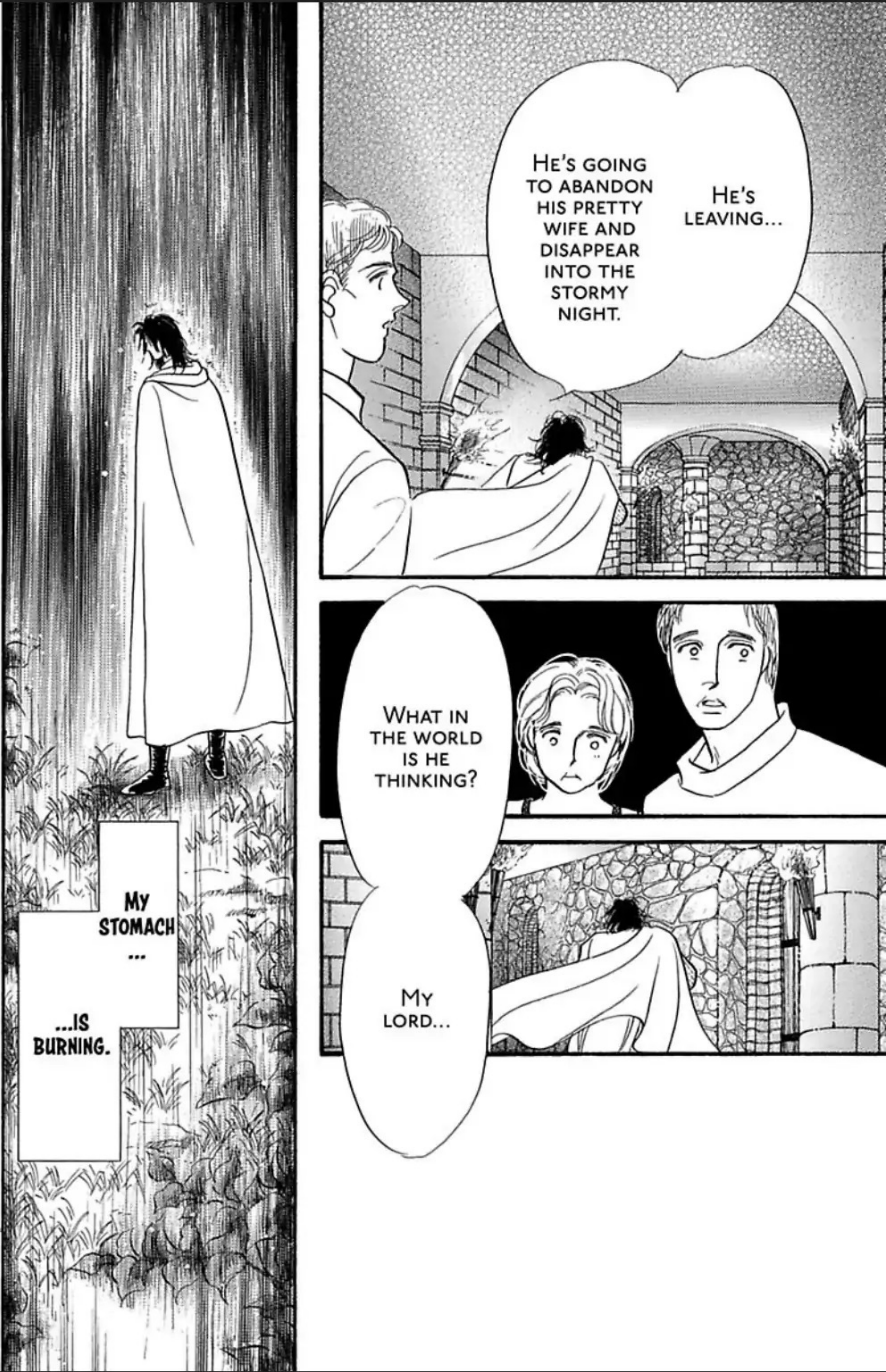

Now, a reward, my lord!
Time for a kiss!

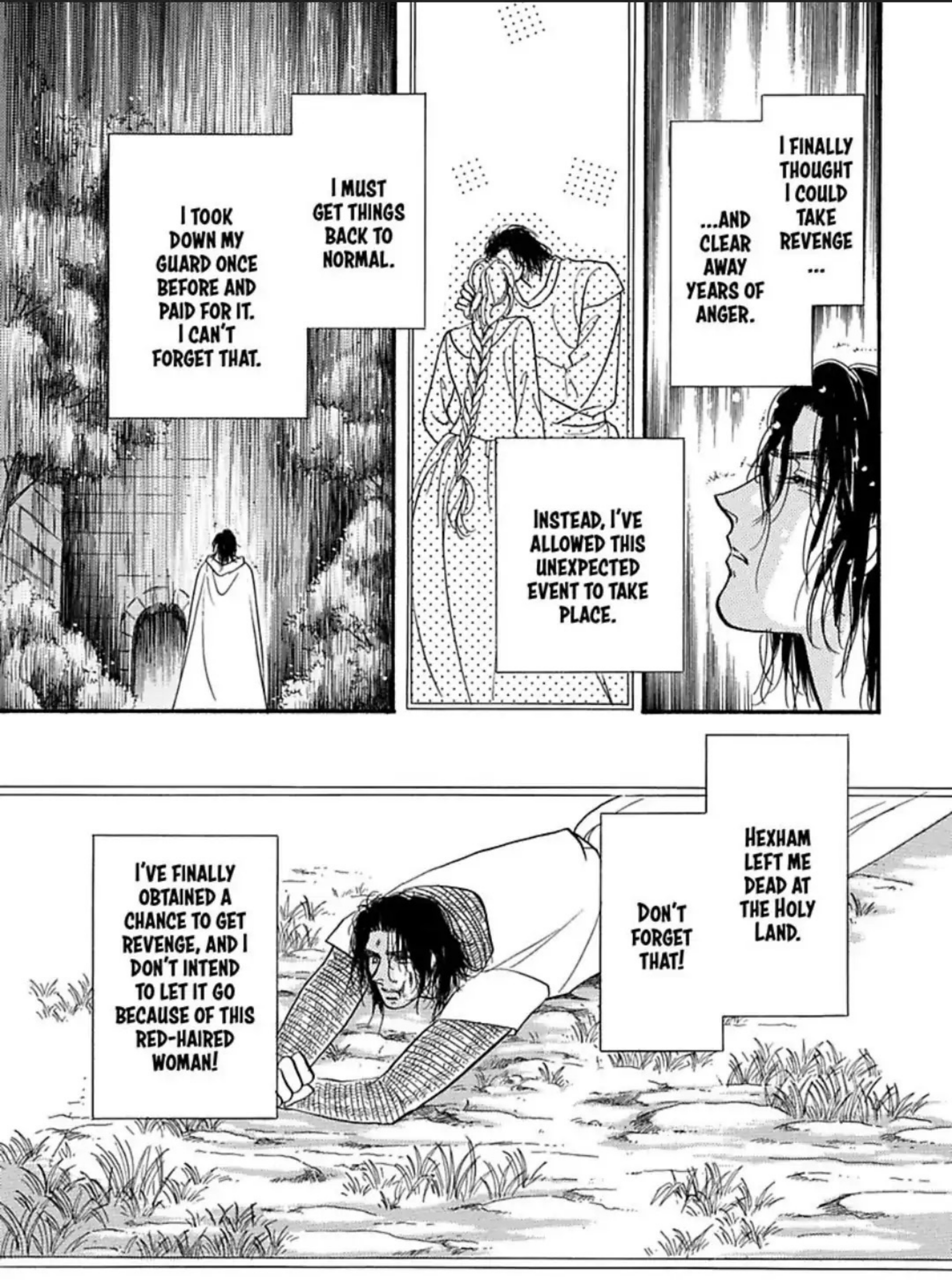

Such great lips!
Her body is so bouncy.
We wish you eternal happiness,
my lord and my lady!
This is for the never-ending successes of your descendants!
Descendants?
No way.
I must keep my distance from her before it's too late.
I should tell everyone that she's related to Hexham.
This is the perfect timing to humiliate her.

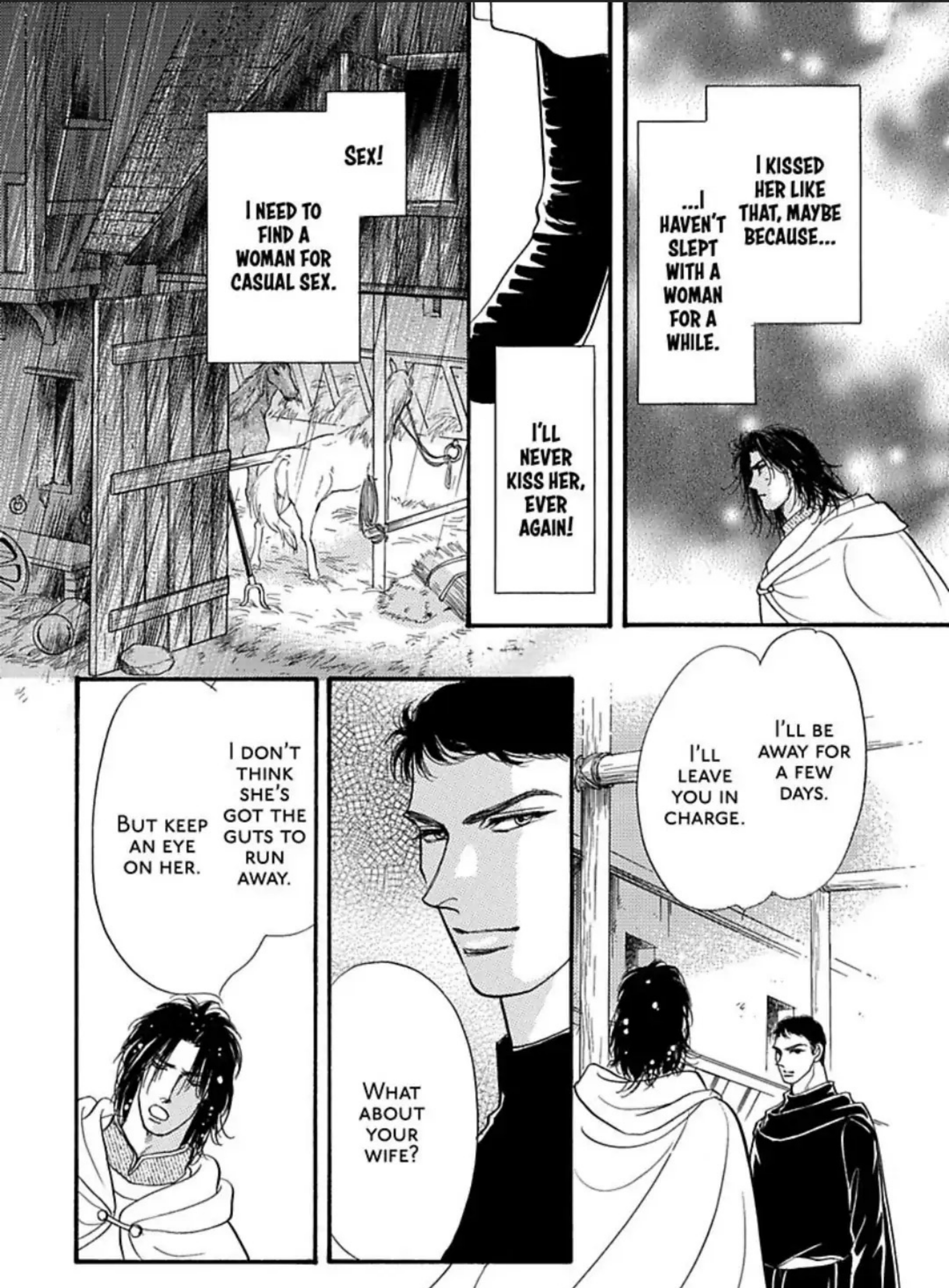

BUT I CAN'T...
WHEN MY PEOPLE ARE HOPEFUL AND FESTIVE,
I CAN'T ALLOW MYSELF TO SOUR THE MOOD.
HOW CAN I?

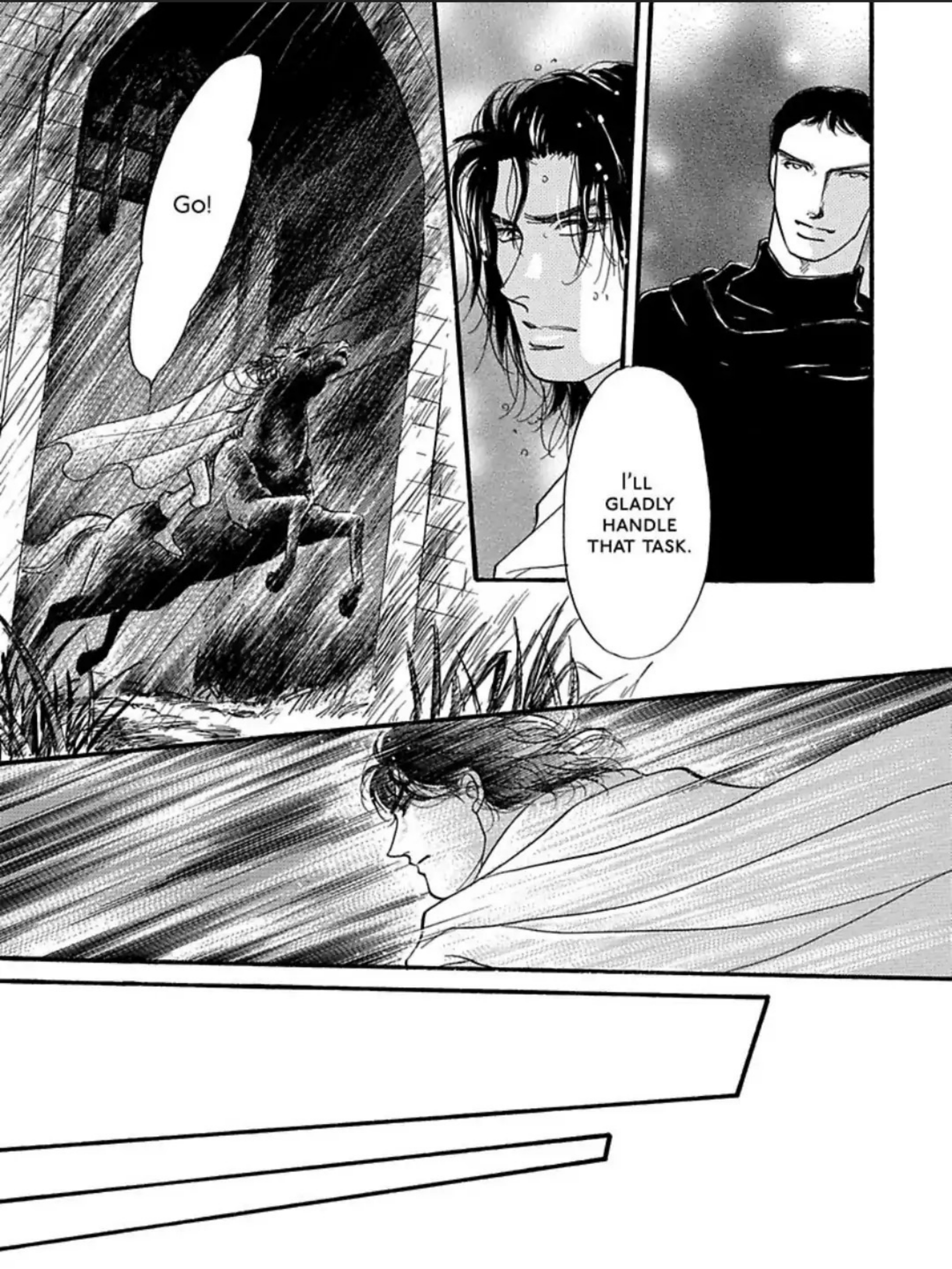

I think I had too much wine.
Looks like it, you drunk nun.
I'm not drunk!
And I am not a nun.
But the fact that you tainted the image of a nun doesn't change.
You were buzzed,
and you seduced a man.
No, I didn't! You're the one who seduced me!
Huh?
But you looked like you were enjoying the kiss.
I'll never touch you, even if it means death!

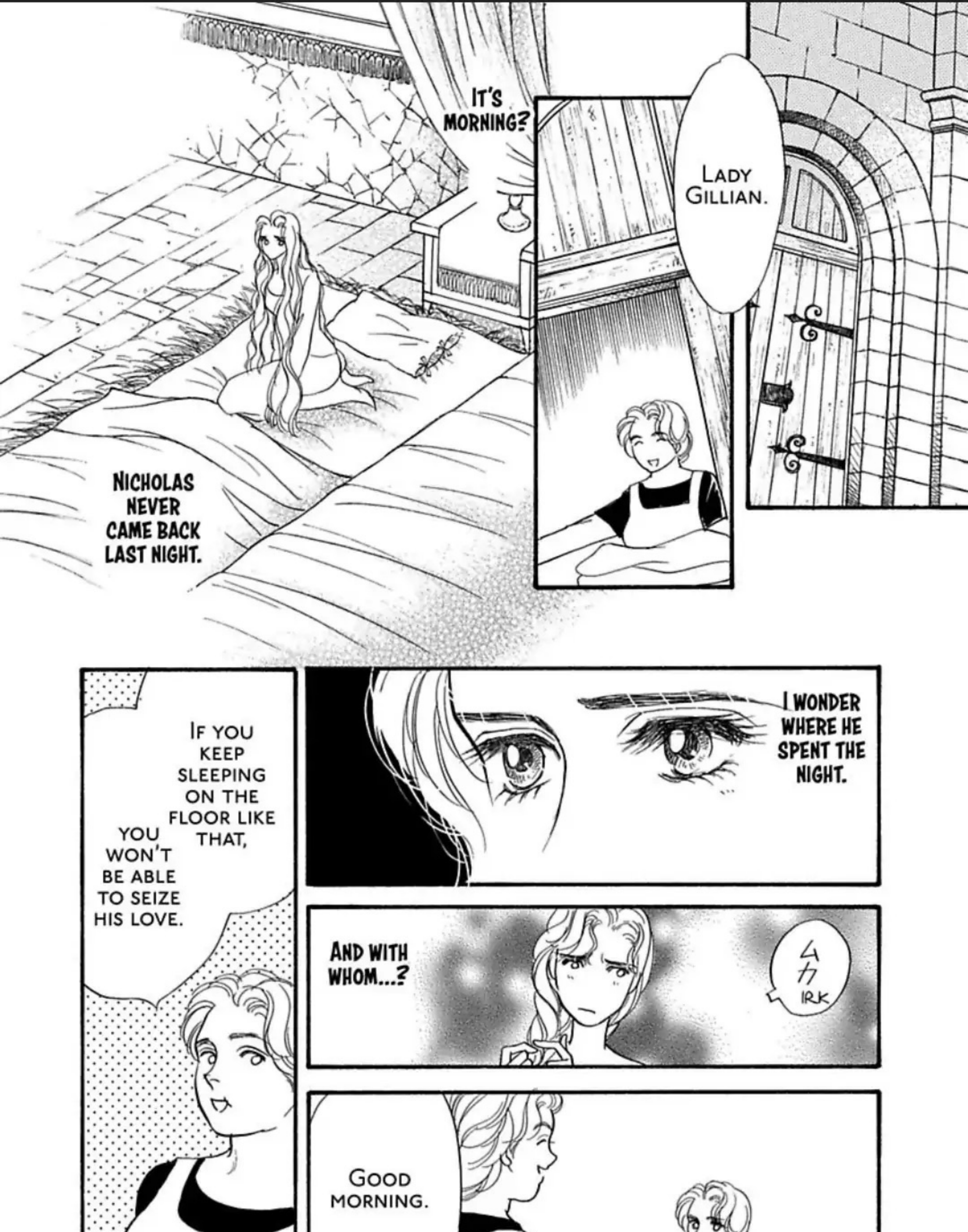

They're going at it again.
Bad chemistry?
After such a passionate kiss?
I bet he doesn't know how to handle his wife.
Why don't you give him a tip or two?
But this can be a good sign. The lord doesn't show his emotions at all, you know. Look at him now.
When they're fighting like that, they won't get to the most crucial part.
My lord...?
SLAM
Ugh!

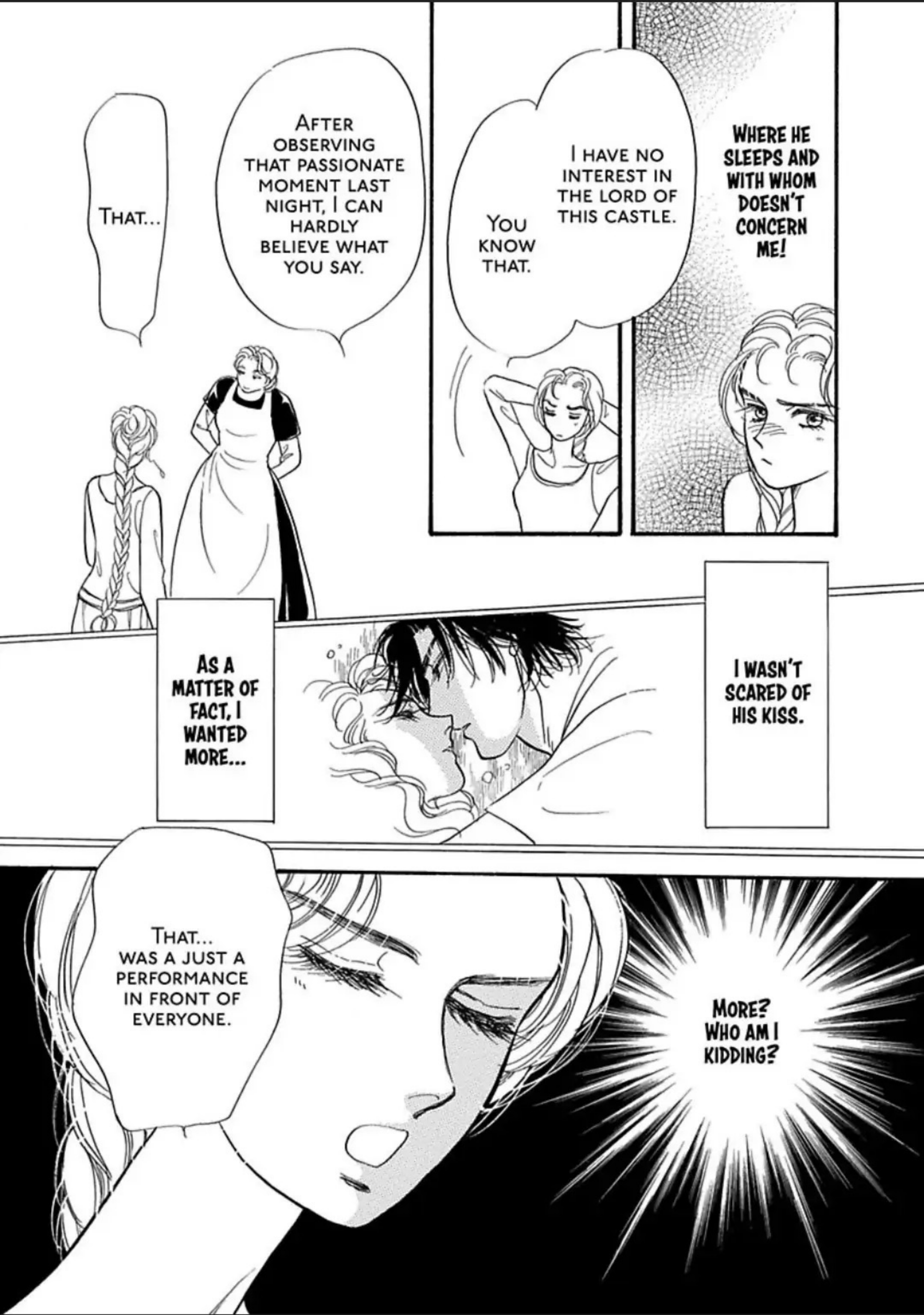

HE'S LEAVING...
HE'S GOING TO ABANDON HIS PRETTY WIFE AND DISAPPEAR INTO THE STORMY NIGHT.
WHAT IN THE WORLD IS HE THINKING?
MY LORD...
MY STOMACH...
...IS BURNING.

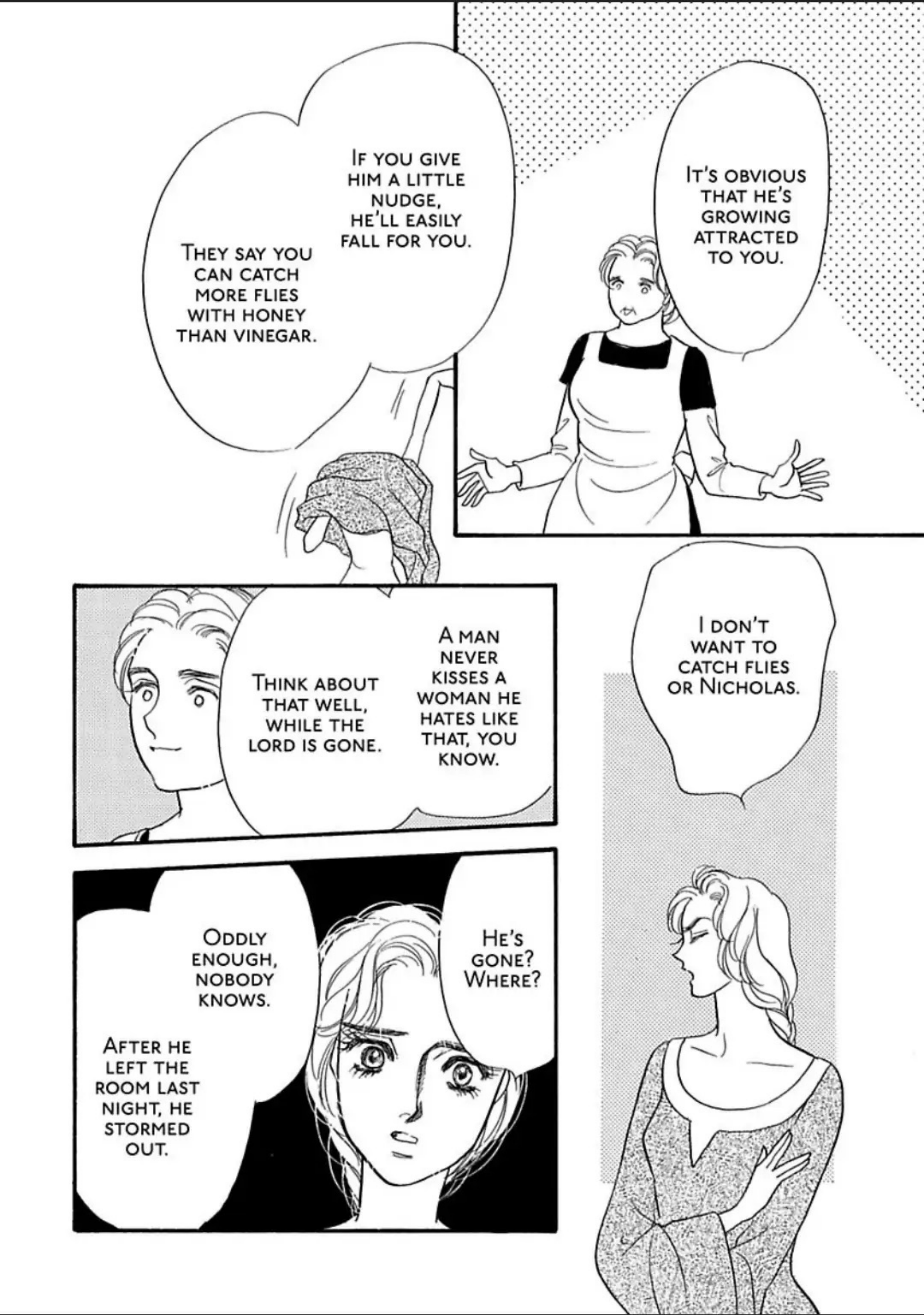

I FINALLY THOUGHT I COULD TAKE REVENGE ...
...AND CLEAR AWAY YEARS OF ANGER.
INSTEAD, I'VE ALLOWED THIS UNEXPECTED EVENT TO TAKE PLACE.
I MUST GET THINGS BACK TO NORMAL.
I TOOK DOWN MY GUARD ONCE BEFORE AND PAID FOR IT. I CAN'T FORGET THAT.
HEXHAM LEFT ME DEAD AT THE HOLY LAND.
DON'T FORGET THAT!
I'VE FINALLY OBTAINED A CHANCE TO GET REVENGE, AND I DON'T INTEND TO LET IT GO BECAUSE OF THIS RED-HAIRED WOMAN!

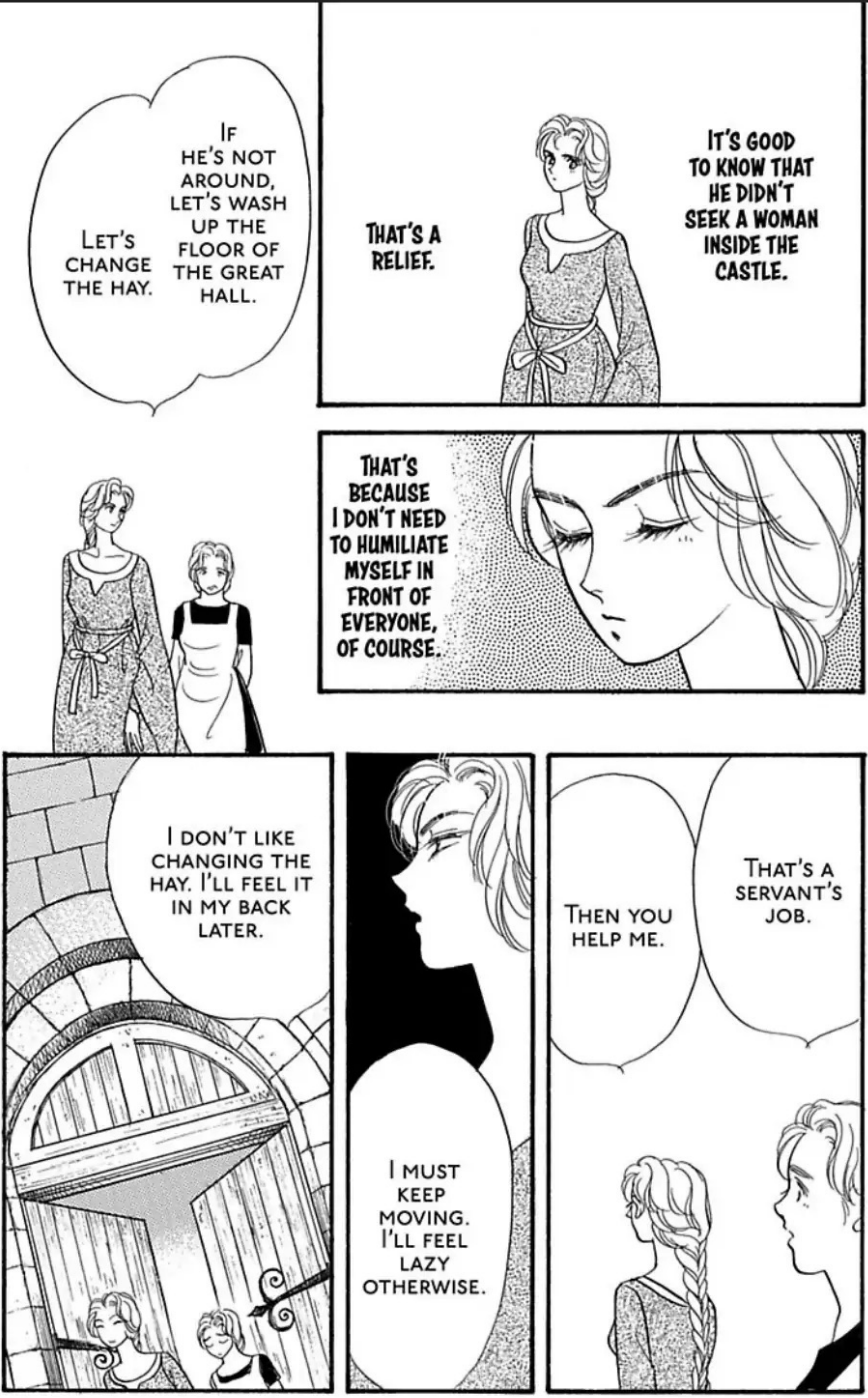

I kissed her like that, maybe because...
...I haven't slept with a woman for a while.
I'll never kiss her, ever again!
Sex!
I need to find a woman for casual sex.
I'll be away for a few days.
I'll leave you in charge.
What about your wife?
I don't think she's got the guts to run away.
But keep an eye on her.

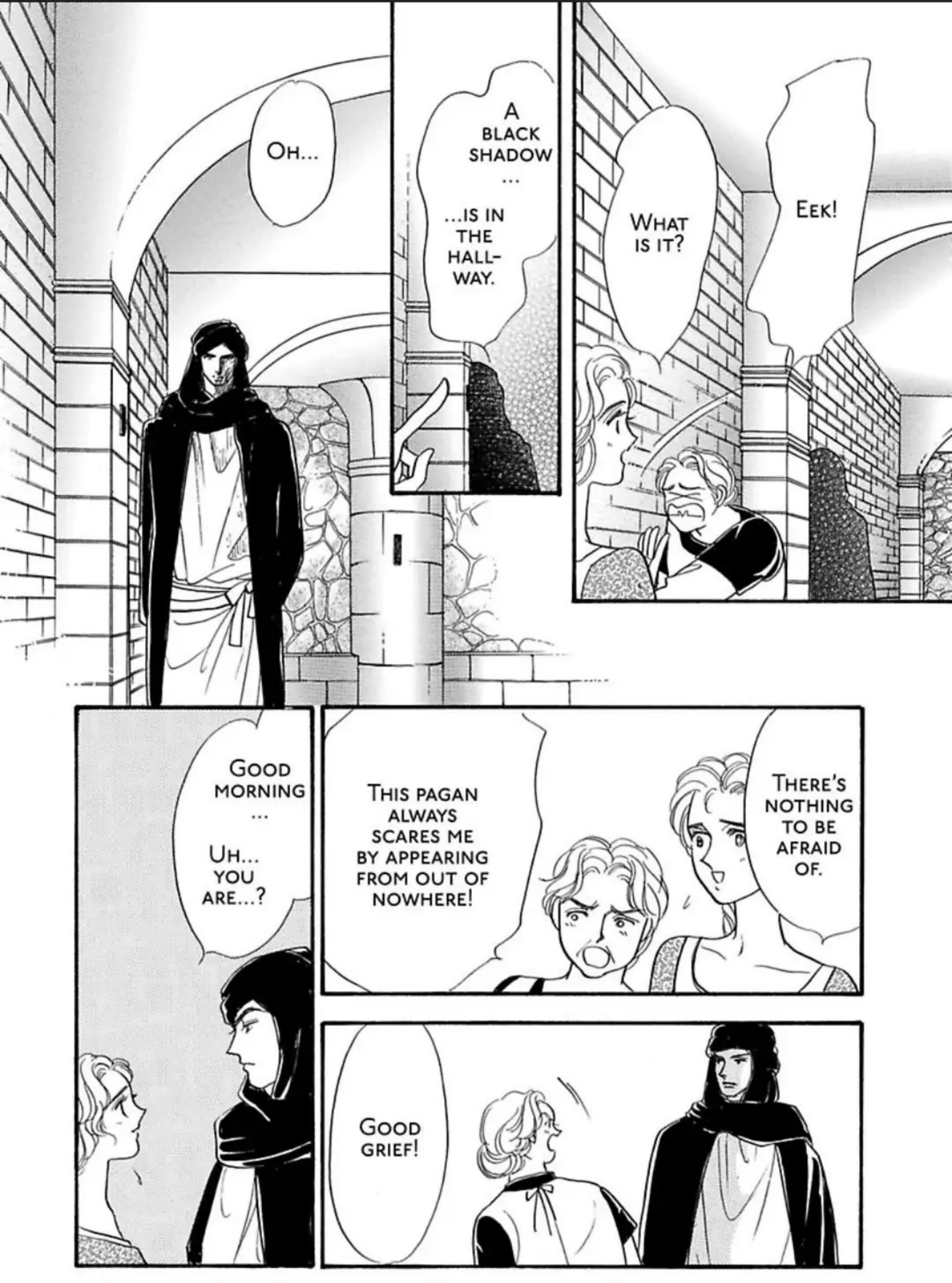

I'LL GLADLY HANDLE THAT TASK.
Go!

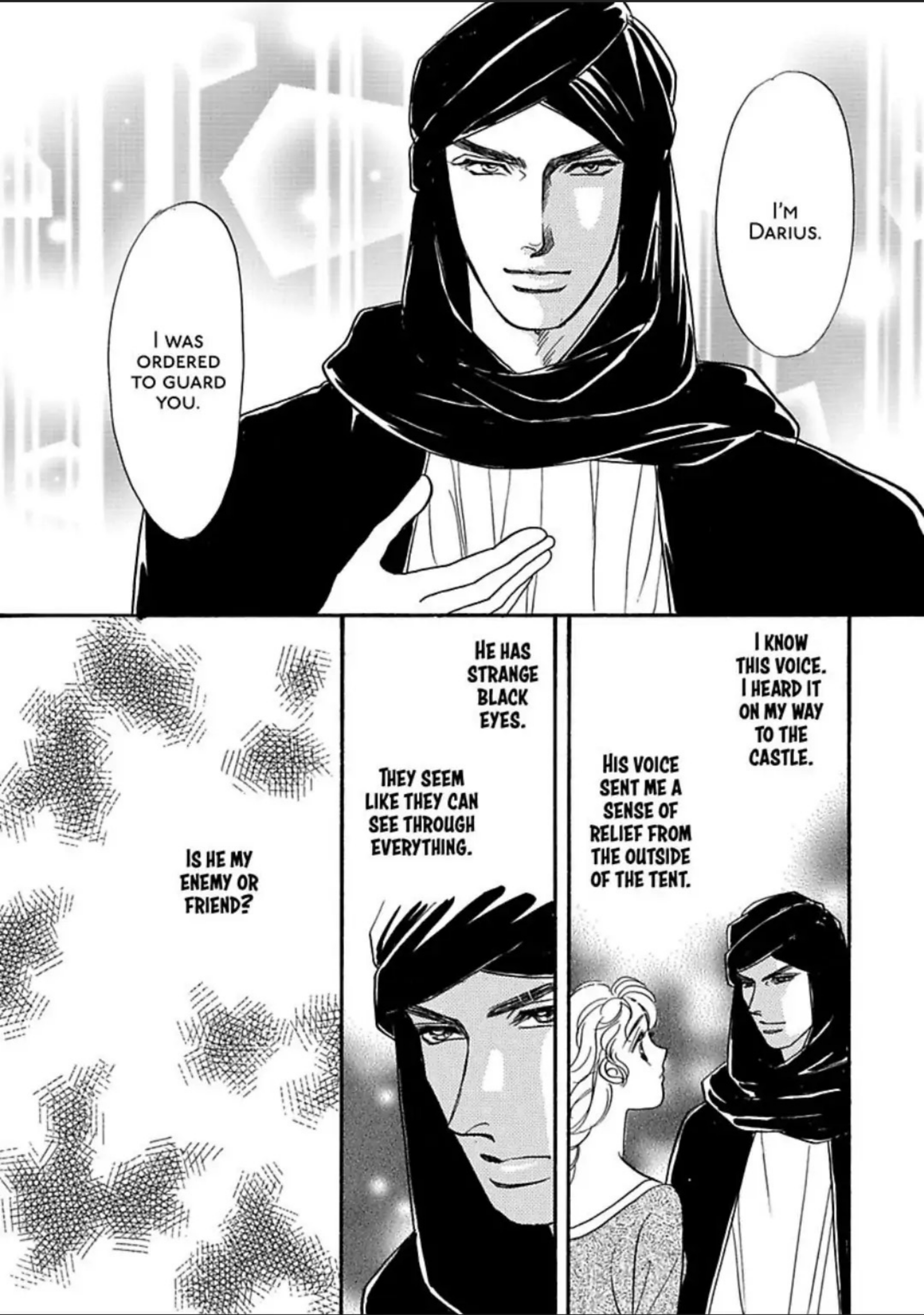

Lady Gillian.
It's morning?
Nicholas never came back last night.
I wonder where he spent the night.
And with whom...?
ムカ IRK
Good morning.
If you keep sleeping on the floor like that, you won't be able to seize his love.

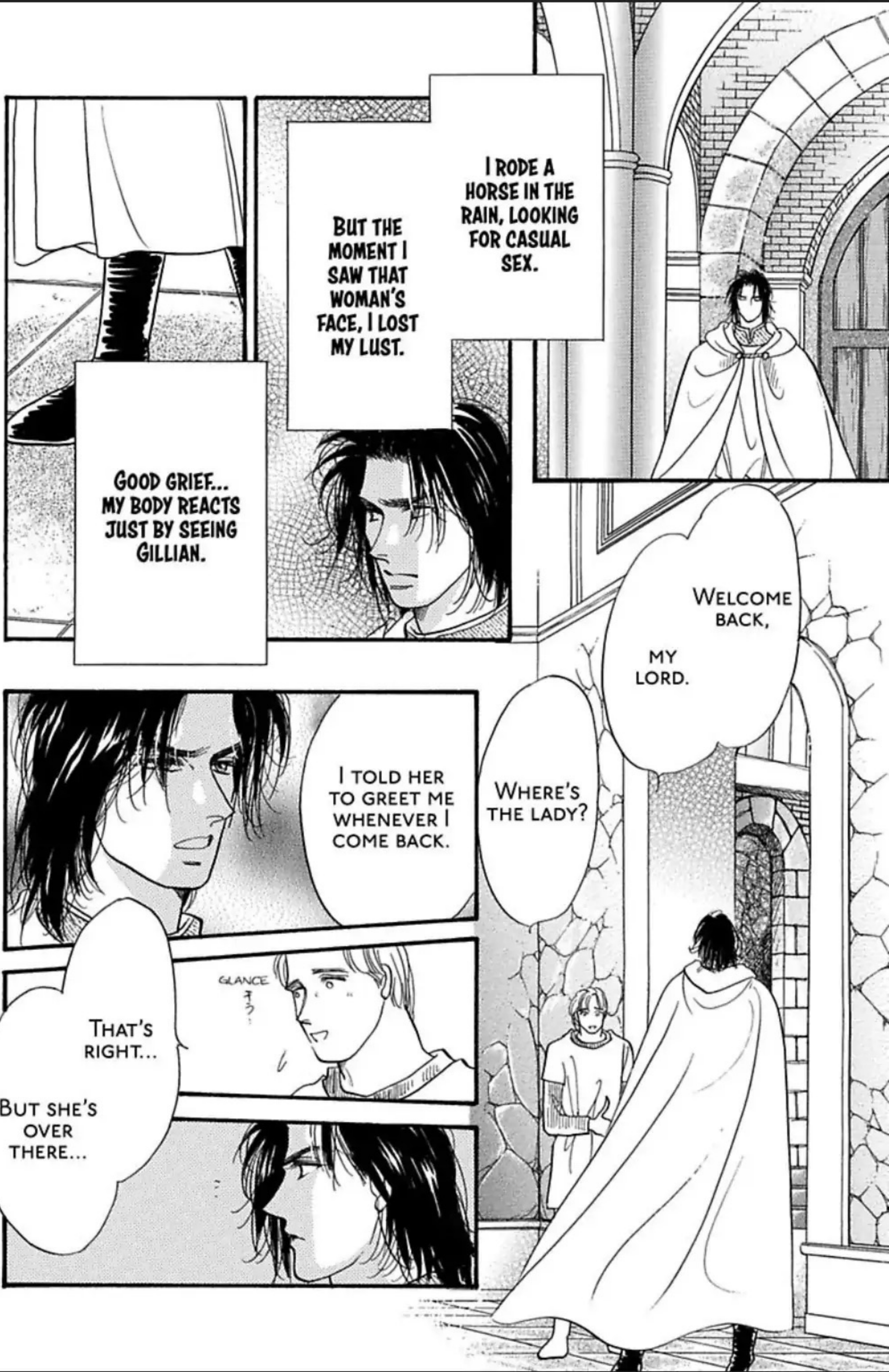

WHERE HE SLEEPS AND WITH WHOM DOESN'T CONCERN ME!
I HAVE NO INTEREST IN THE LORD OF THIS CASTLE.
YOU KNOW THAT.
AFTER OBSERVING THAT PASSIONATE MOMENT LAST NIGHT, I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE WHAT YOU SAY.
THAT...
I WASN'T SCARED OF HIS KISS.
AS A MATTER OF FACT, I WANTED MORE...
MORE? WHO AM I KIDDING?
THAT... WAS A JUST A PERFORMANCE IN FRONT OF EVERYONE.

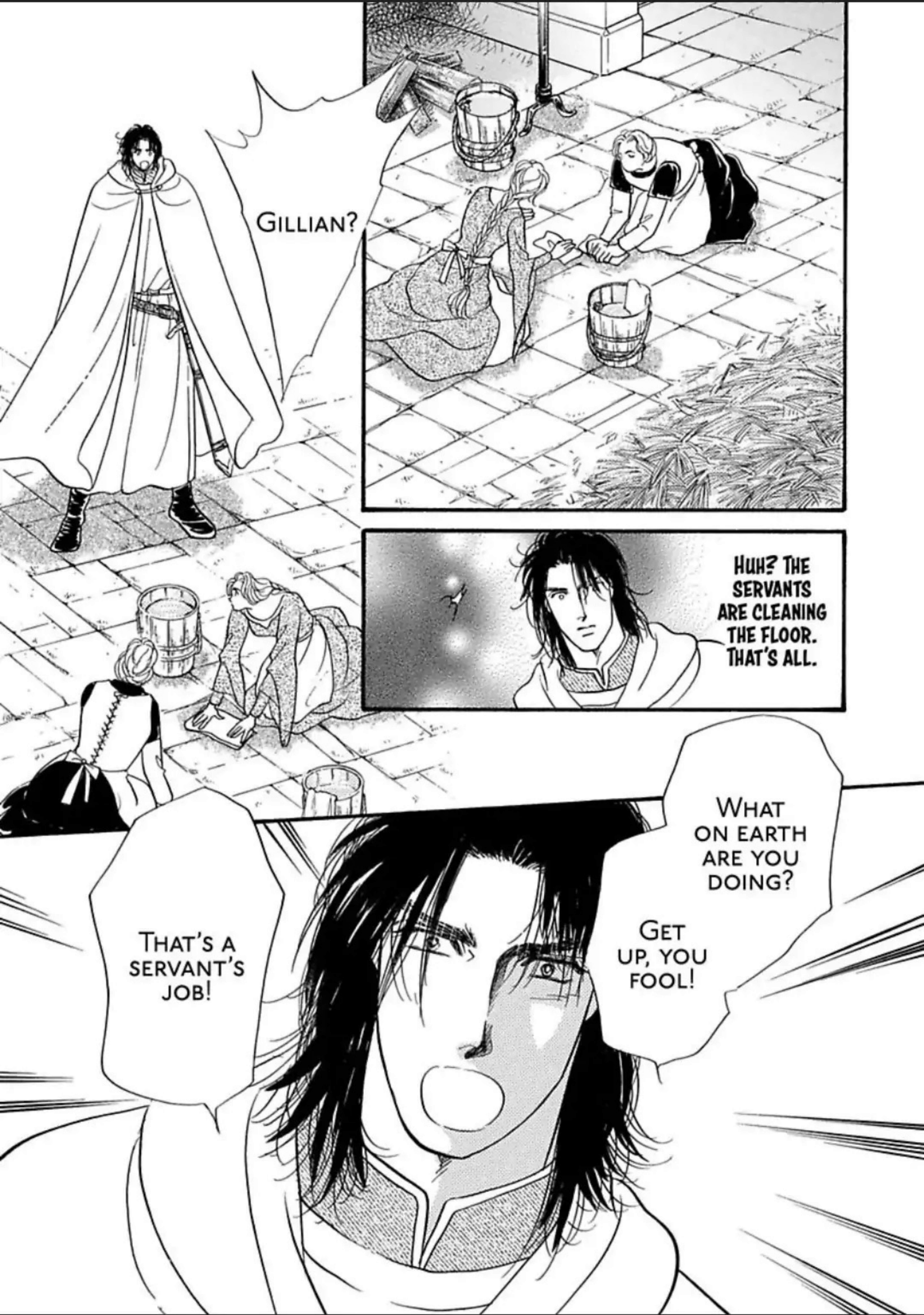

It's obvious that he's growing attracted to you.
If you give him a little nudge, he'll easily fall for you.
They say you can catch more flies with honey than vinegar.
I don't want to catch flies or Nicholas.
A man never kisses a woman he hates like that, you know.
Think about that well, while the lord is gone.
He's gone? Where?
Oddly enough, nobody knows.
After he left the room last night, he stormed out.

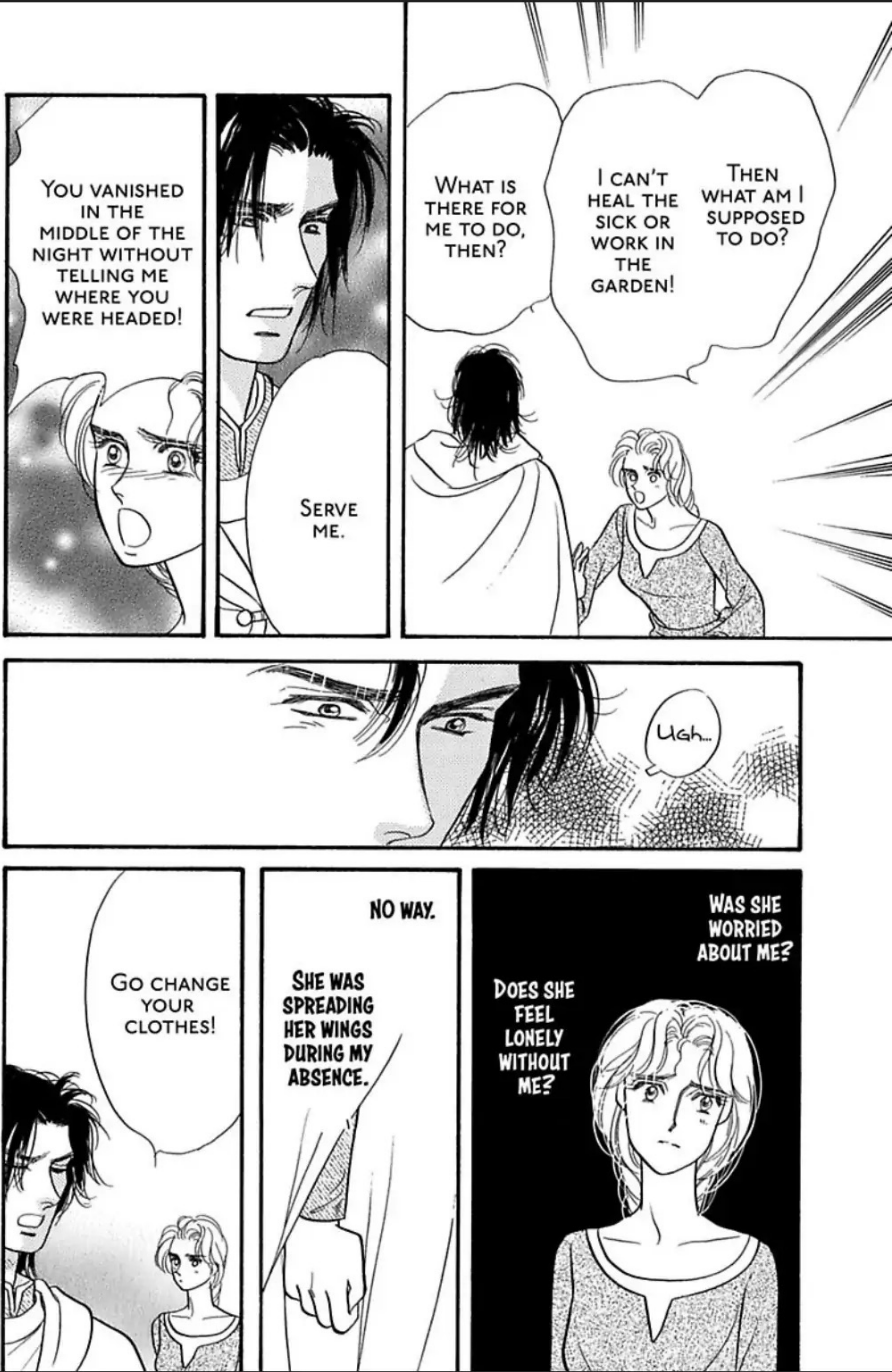

It's good to know that he didn't seek a woman inside the castle.
That's a relief.
If he's not around, let's wash up the floor of the great hall.
Let's change the hay.
That's because I don't need to humiliate myself in front of everyone, of course.
That's a servant's job.
Then you help me.
I must keep moving. I'll feel lazy otherwise.
I don't like changing the hay. I'll feel it in my back later.

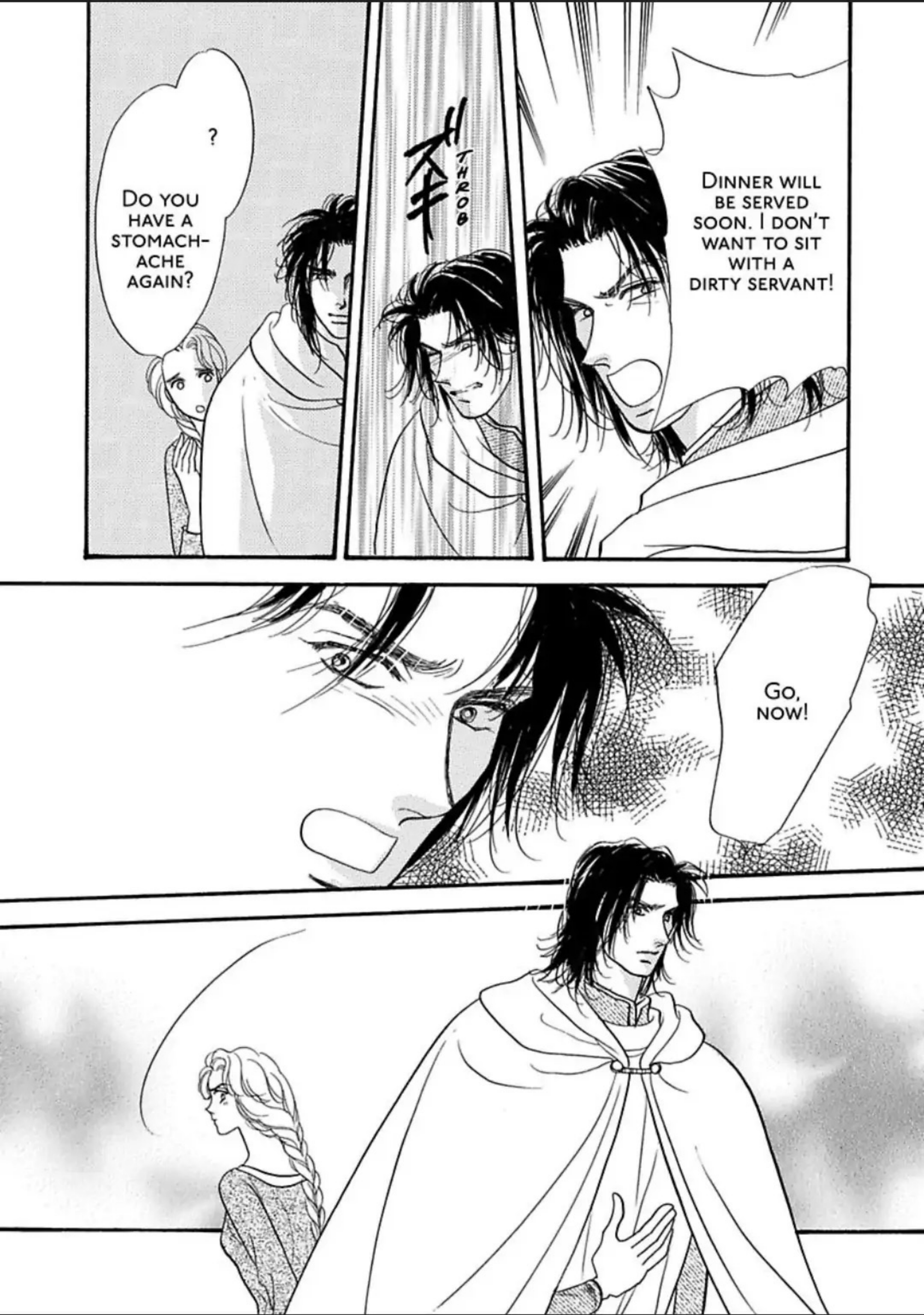

Eek!
What is it?
A black shadow ... ...is in the hallway.
Oh...
There's nothing to be afraid of.
This pagan always scares me by appearing from out of nowhere!
Good grief!
Good morning ... Uh... you are...?

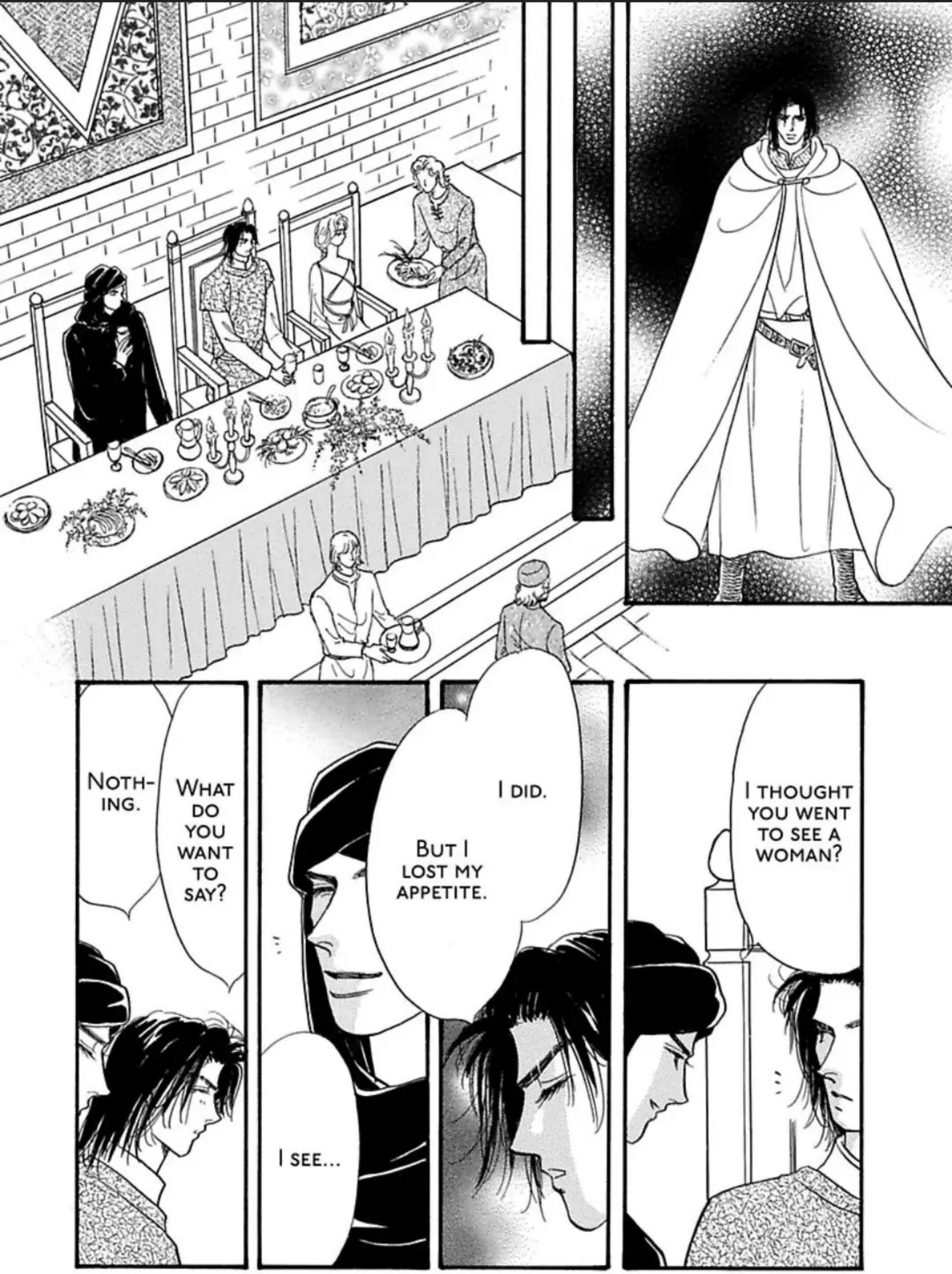

I'M DARIUS.
I WAS ORDERED TO GUARD YOU.
I KNOW THIS VOICE. I HEARD IT ON MY WAY TO THE CASTLE.
HIS VOICE SENT ME A SENSE OF RELIEF FROM THE OUTSIDE OF THE TENT.
HE HAS STRANGE BLACK EYES.
THEY SEEM LIKE THEY CAN SEE THROUGH EVERYTHING.
IS HE MY ENEMY OR FRIEND?

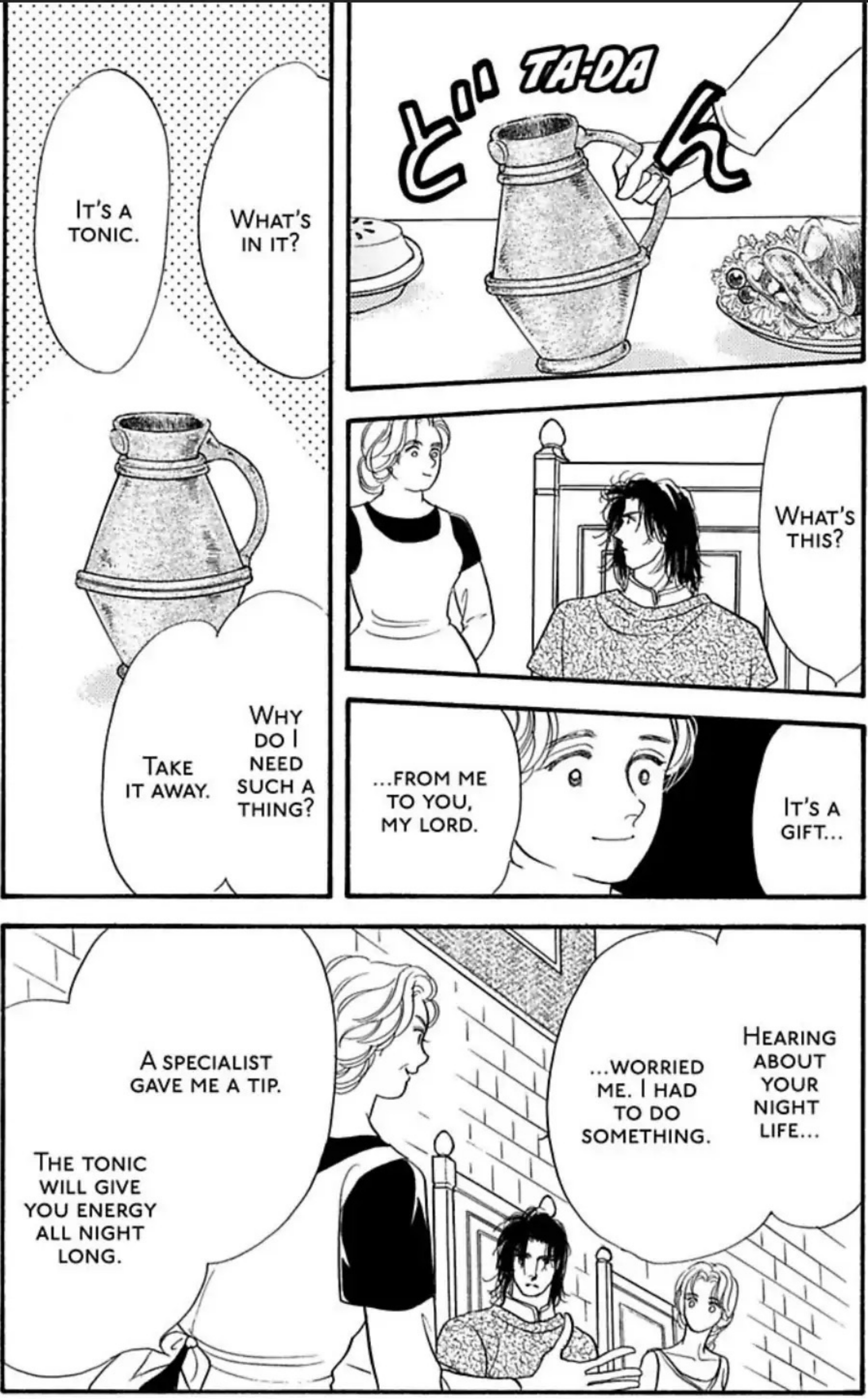

I rode a horse in the rain, looking for casual sex.
But the moment I saw that woman's face, I lost my lust.
Good grief... my body reacts just by seeing Gillian.
Welcome back, my lord.
Where's the lady?
I told her to greet me whenever I come back.
GLANCE
That's right... But she's over there...

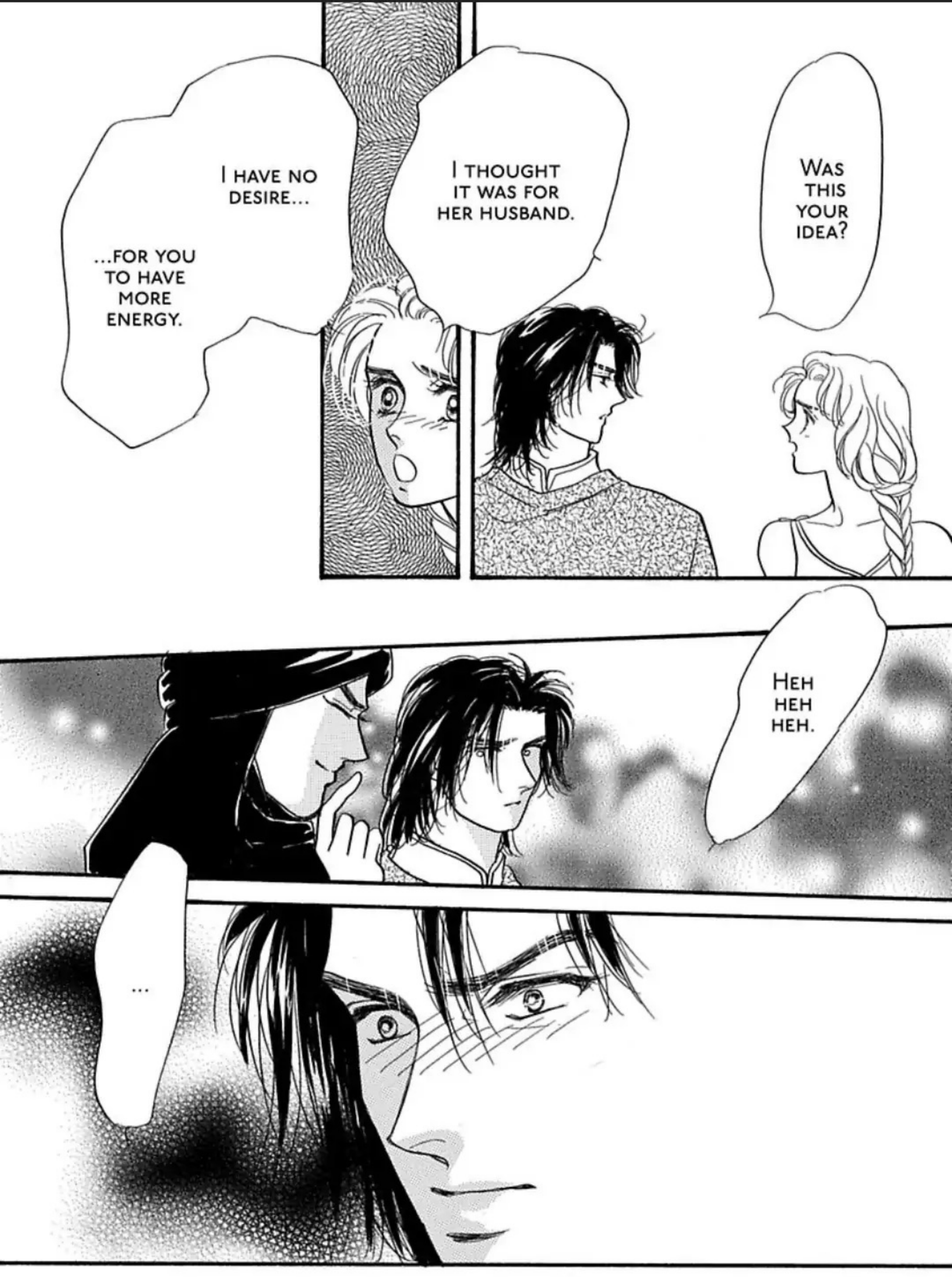

GILLIAN?
HUH? THE SERVANTS ARE CLEANING THE FLOOR. THAT'S ALL.
WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU DOING?
GET UP, YOU FOOL!
THAT'S A SERVANT'S JOB!

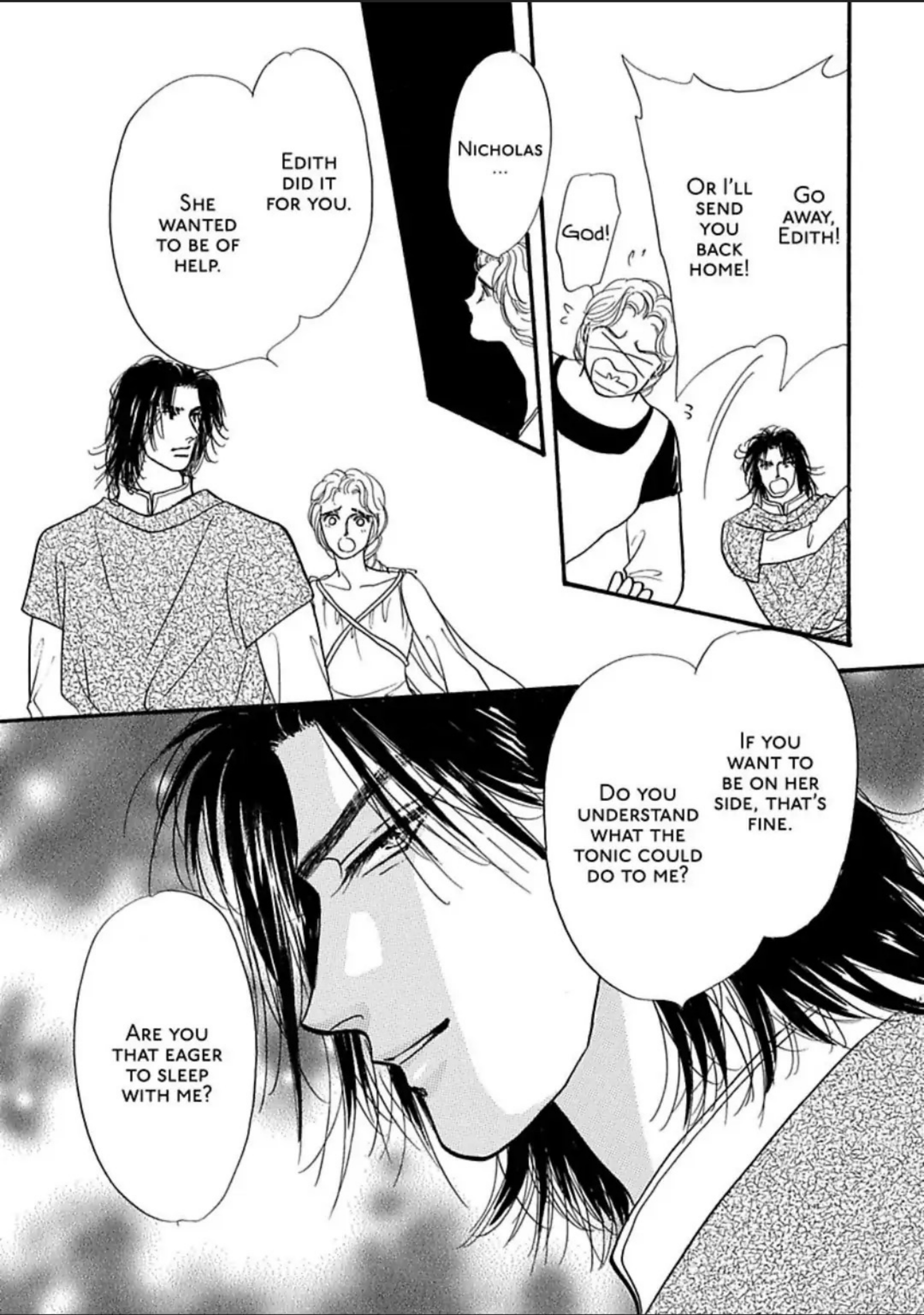

Then what am I supposed to do?
I can't heal the sick or work in the garden!
What is there for me to do, then?
Serve me.
You vanished in the middle of the night without telling me where you were headed!
Ugh...
Was she worried about me?
Does she feel lonely without me?
No way.
She was spreading her wings during my absence.
Go change your clothes!

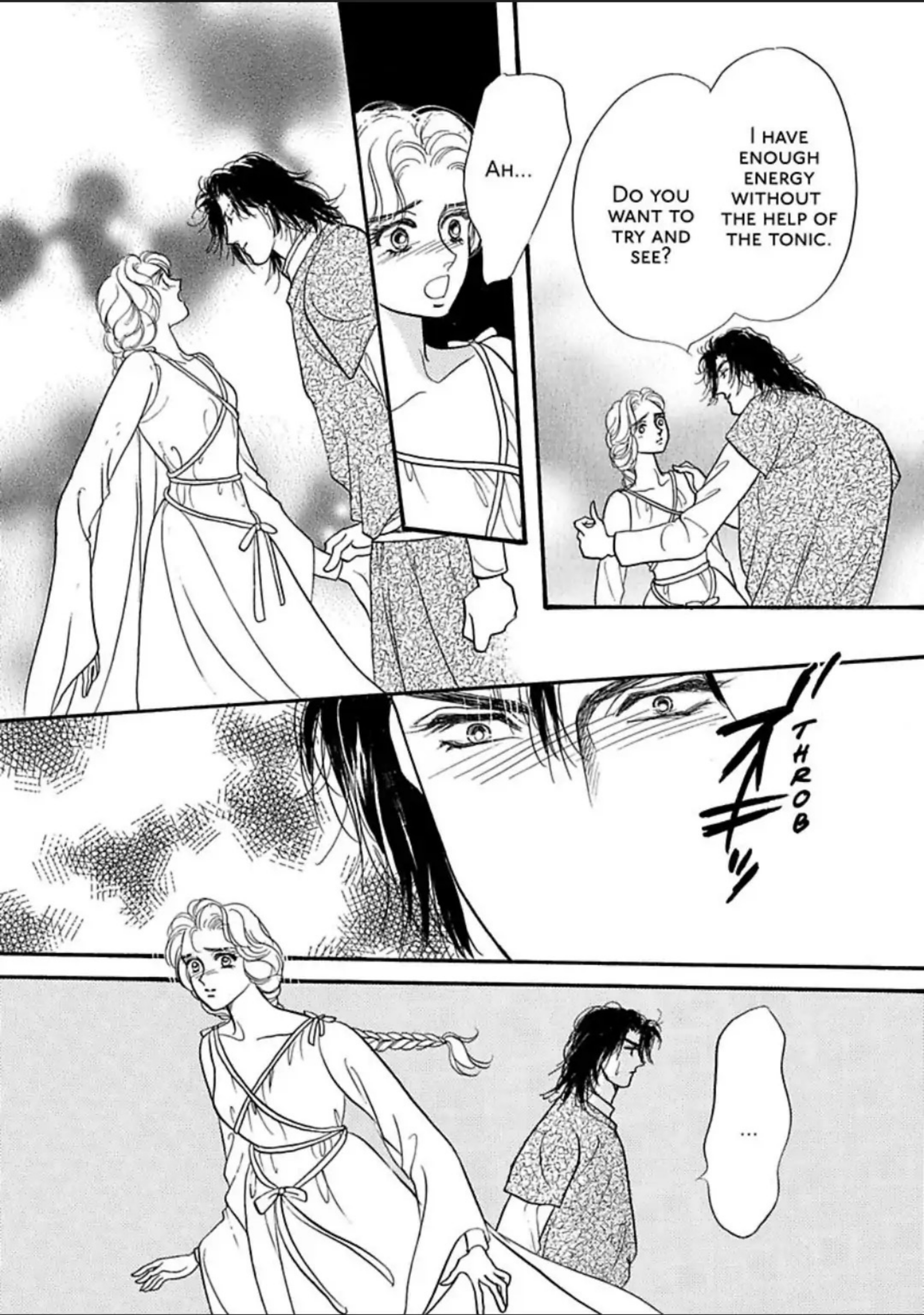

Dinner will be served soon. I don't want to sit with a dirty servant!
ズキ
THROB
?
Do you have a stomachache again?
Go, now!

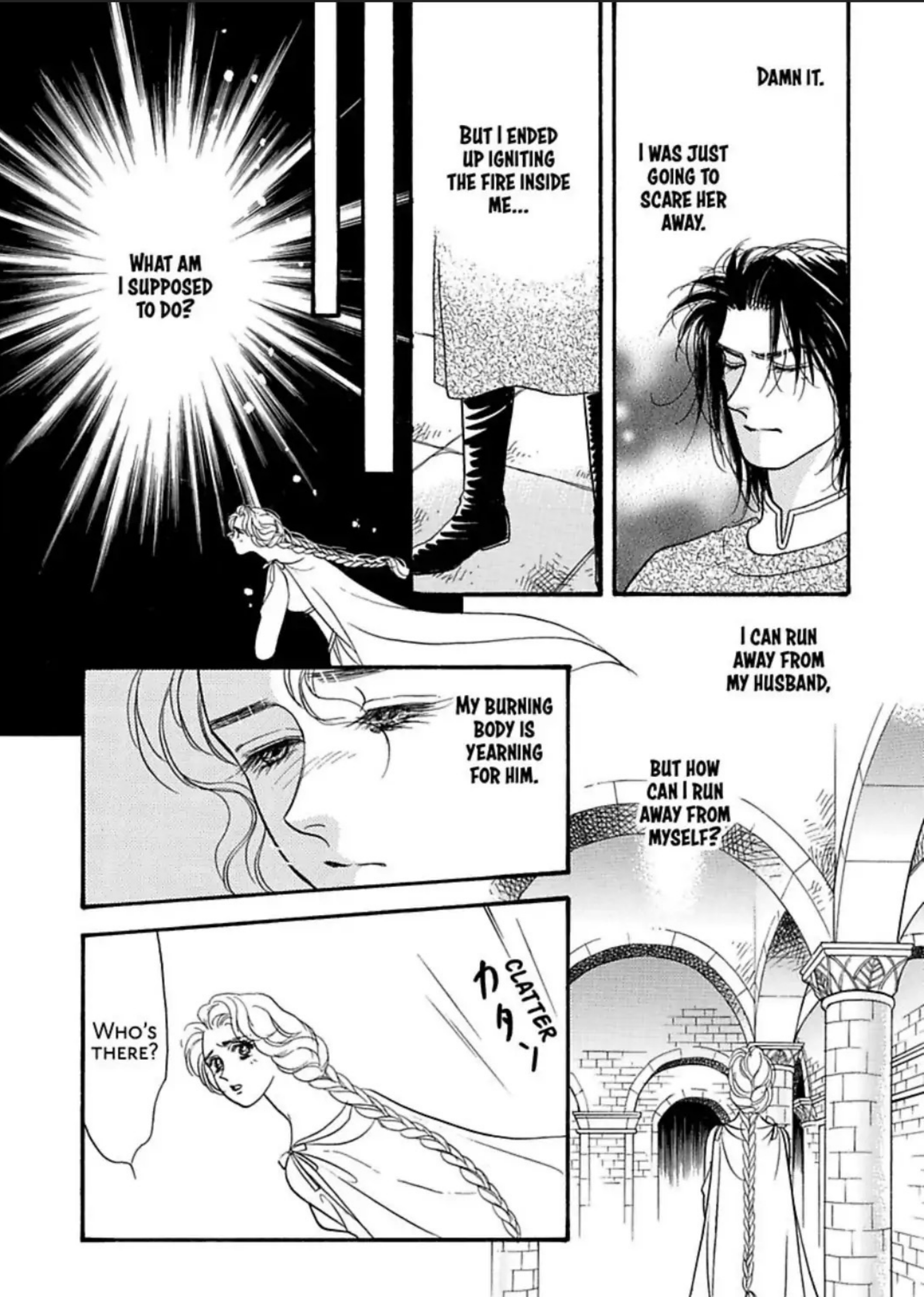

I thought you went to see a woman?
I did.
But I lost my appetite.
I see...
What do you want to say?
Nothing.

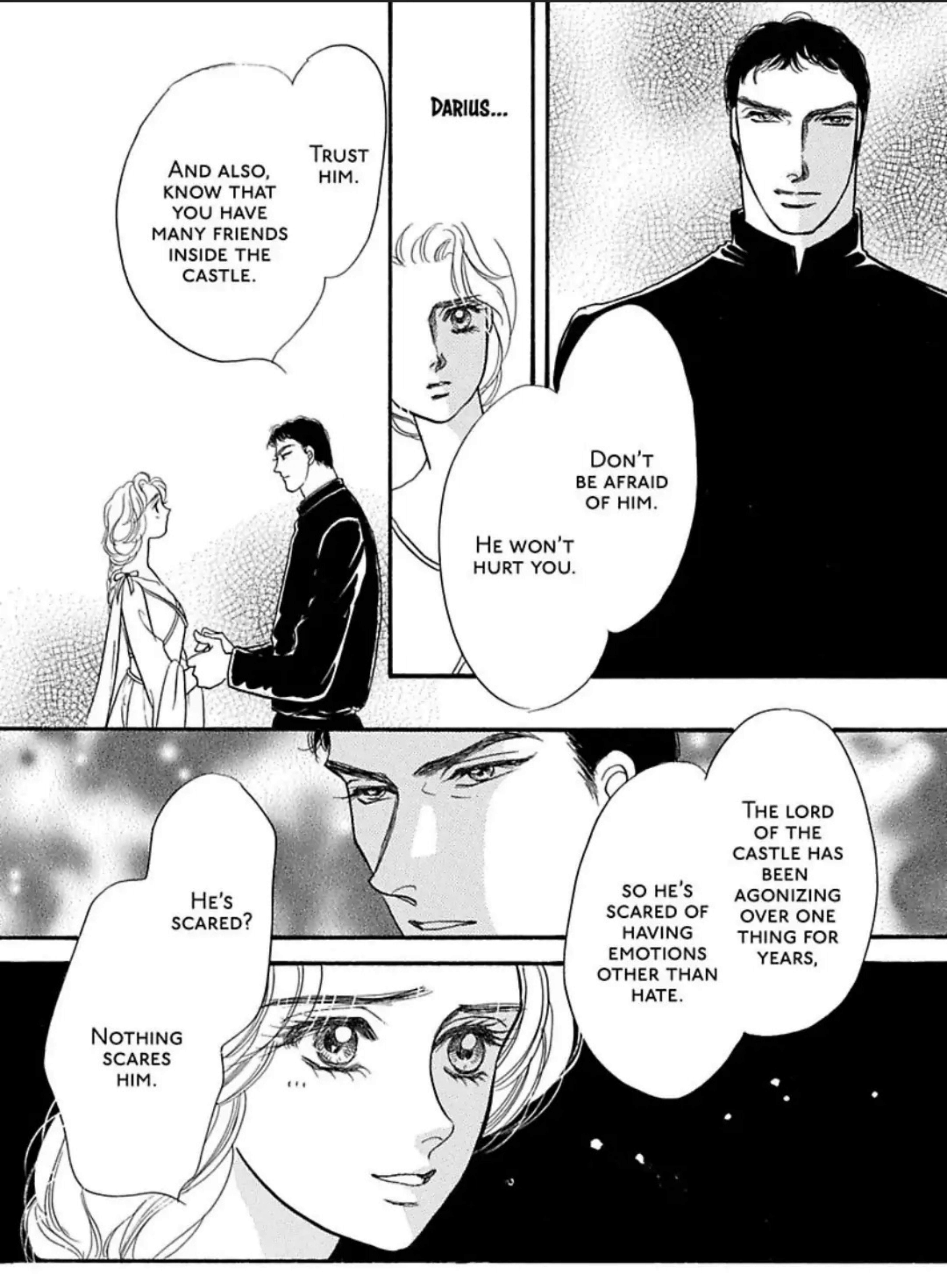

とん
TA-DA
What's this?
It's a gift...
...from me to you, my lord.
What's in it?
It's a tonic.
Why do I need such a thing?
Take it away.
Hearing about your night life...
...worried me. I had to do something.
A specialist gave me a tip.
The tonic will give you energy all night long.

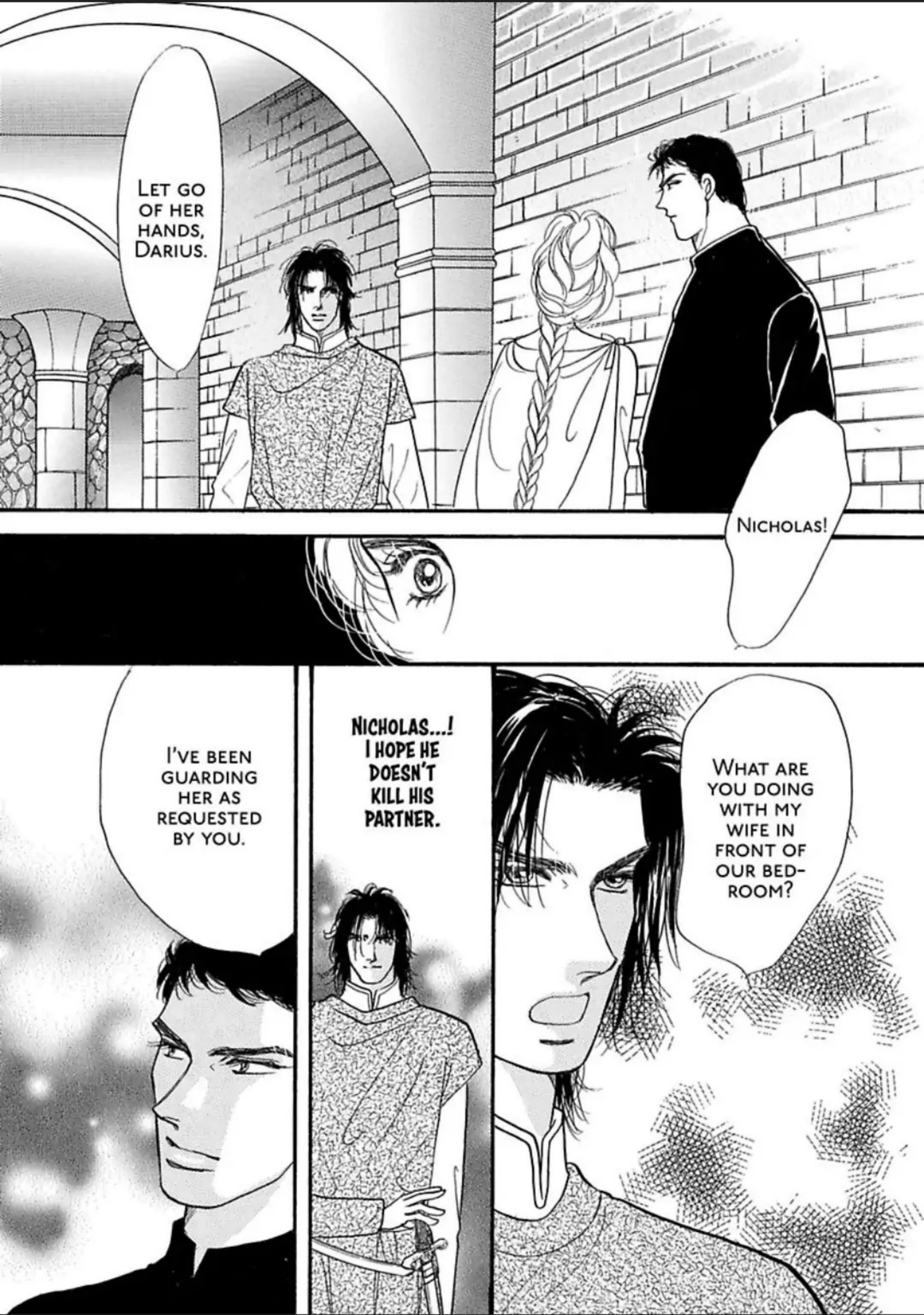

Was this your idea?
I thought it was for her husband.
I have no desire...
...for you to have more energy.
Heh heh heh.
...

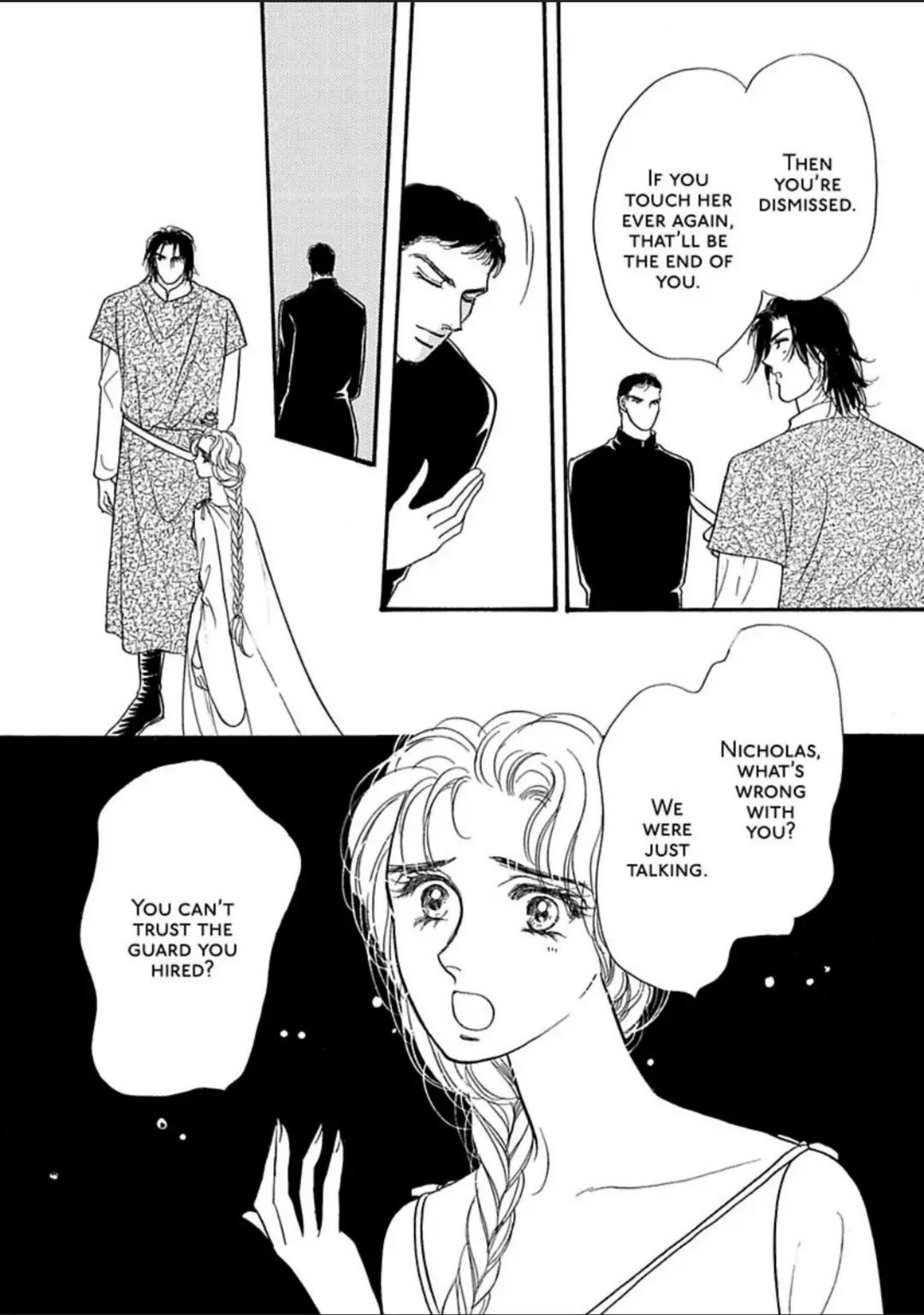

Go away, Edith!
Or I'll send you back home!
God!
Nicholas...
Edith did it for you.
She wanted to be of help.
If you want to be on her side, that's fine.
Do you understand what the tonic could do to me?
Are you that eager to sleep with me?

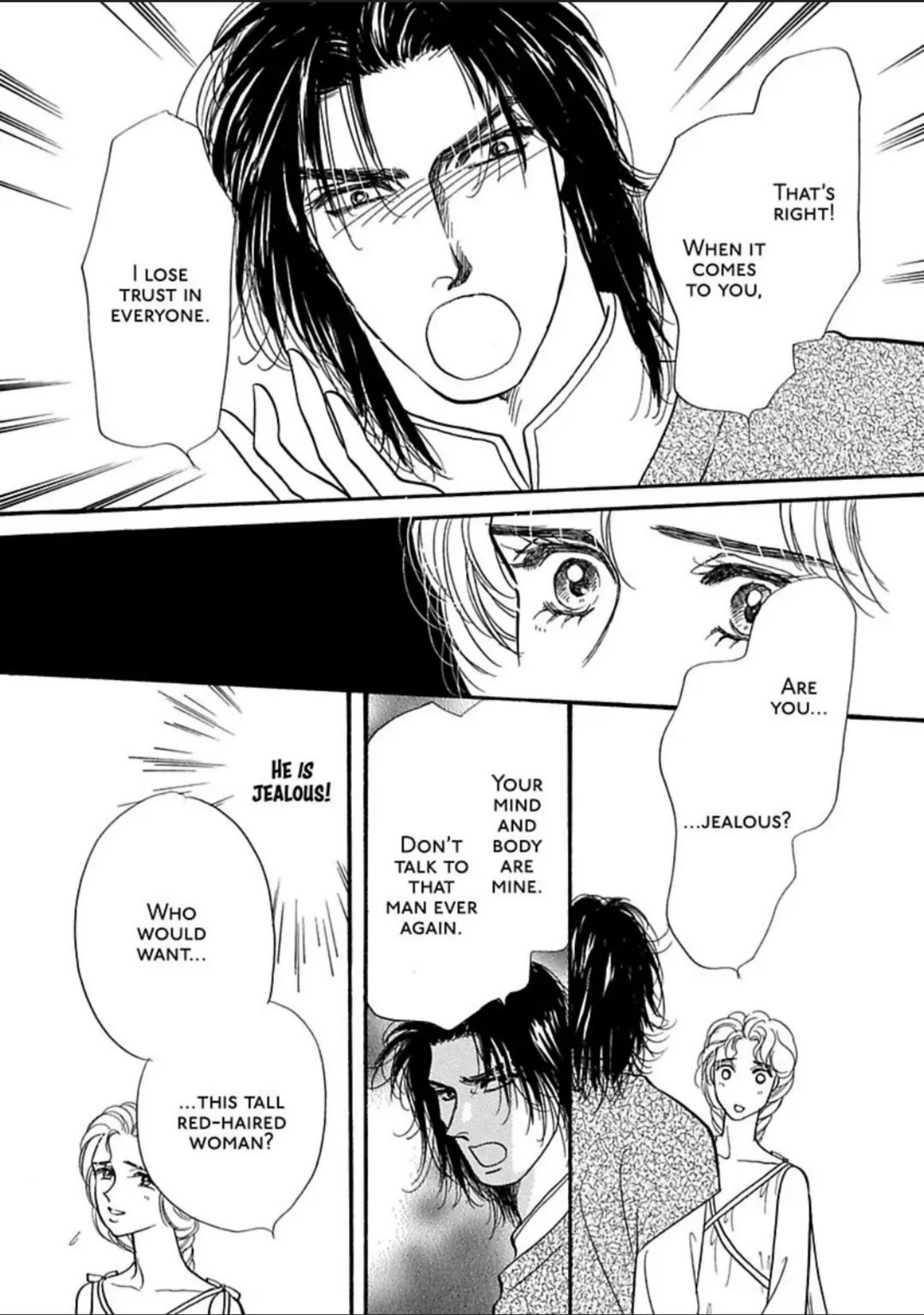

I HAVE ENOUGH ENERGY WITHOUT THE HELP OF THE TONIC.
DO YOU WANT TO TRY AND SEE?
AH...
THROB
...

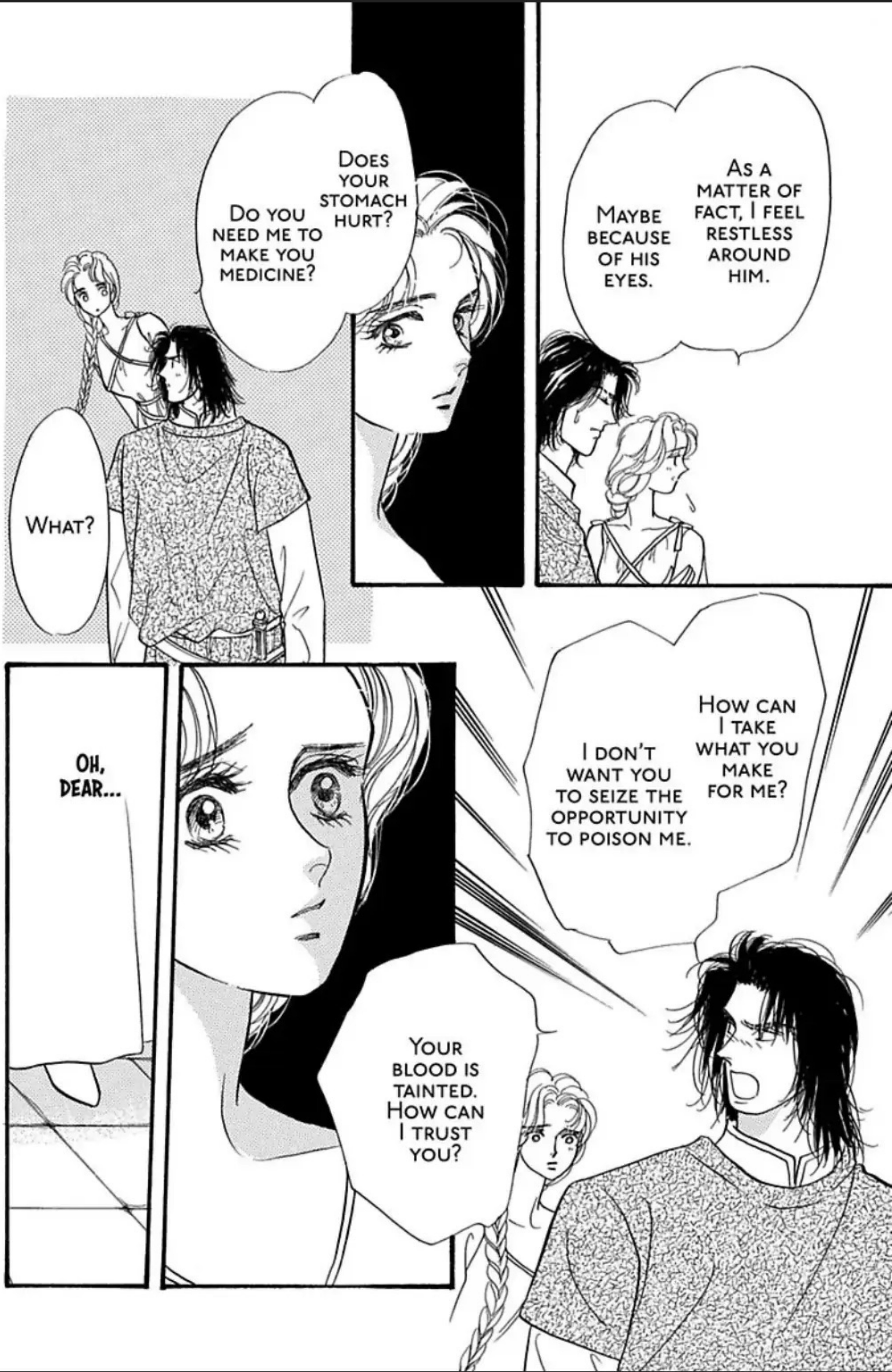

DAMN IT.
I WAS JUST GOING TO SCARE HER AWAY.
BUT I ENDED UP IGNITING THE FIRE INSIDE ME...
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?
I CAN RUN AWAY FROM MY HUSBAND,
BUT HOW CAN I RUN AWAY FROM MYSELF?
MY BURNING BODY IS YEARNING FOR HIM.
カタ
CLATTER
Who's there?

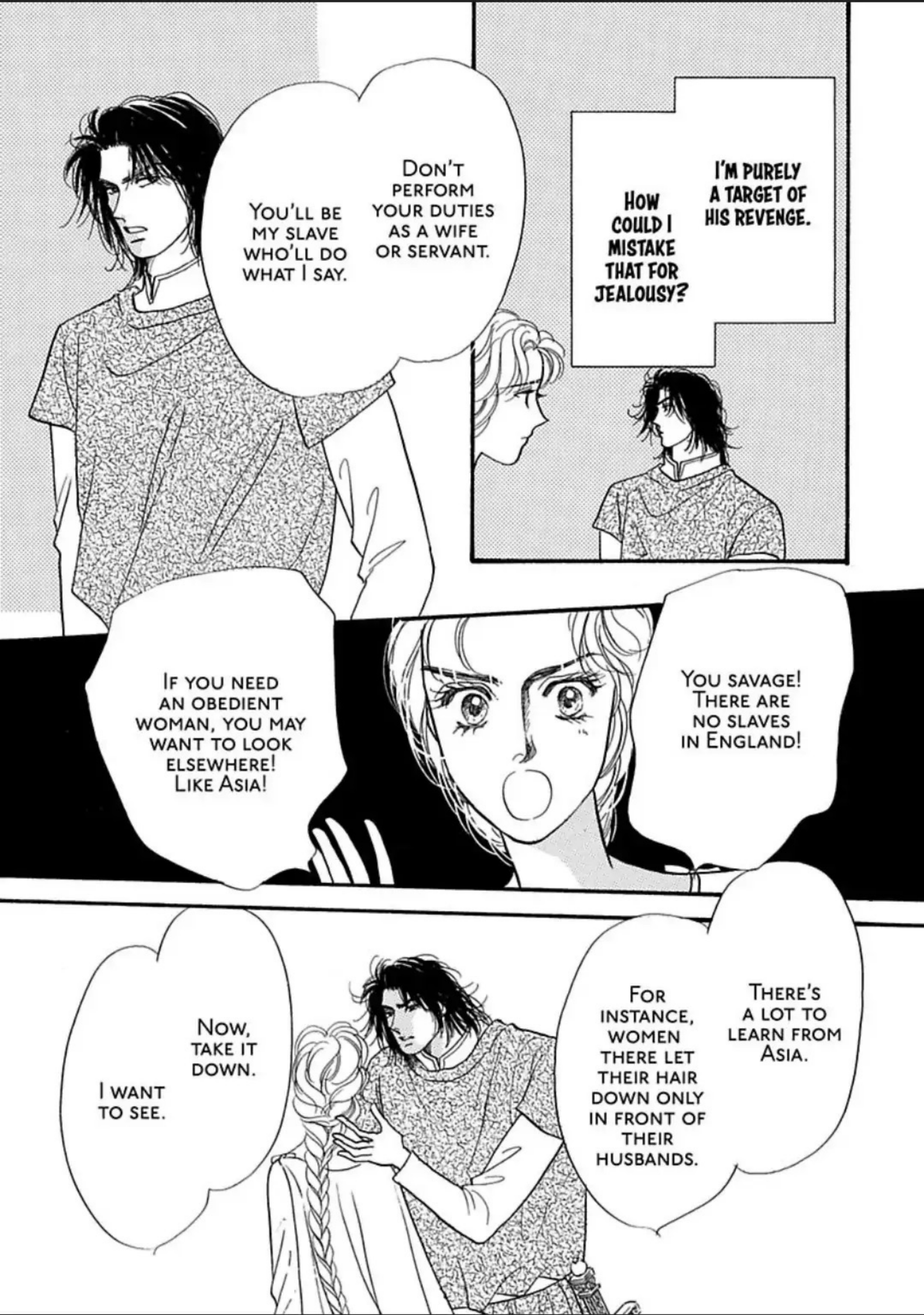

Don't be afraid of him.
He won't hurt you.
Darius...
Trust him.
And also, know that you have many friends inside the castle.
The lord of the castle has been agonizing over one thing for years,
so he's scared of having emotions other than hate.
He's scared?
Nothing scares him.
...

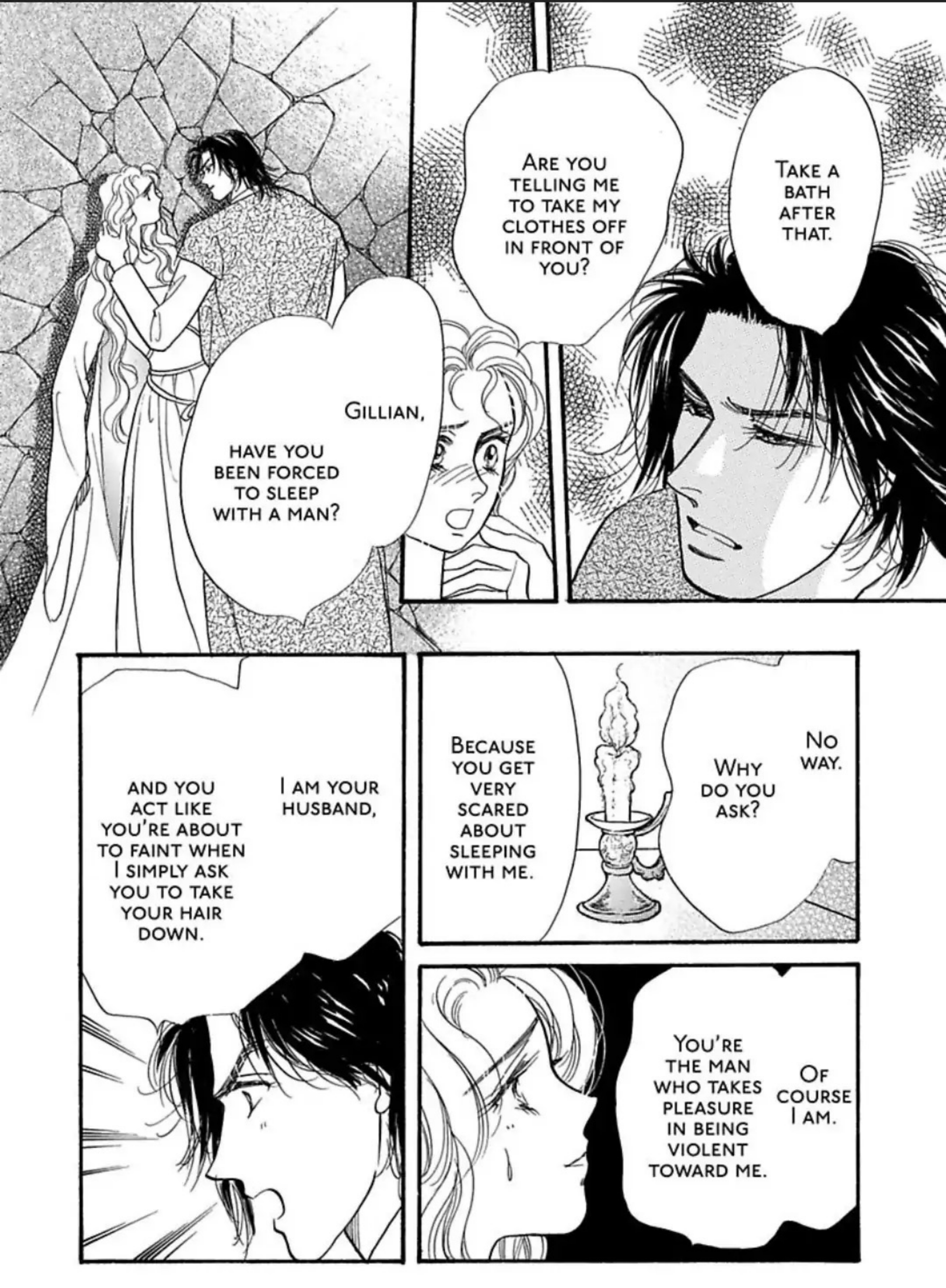

LET GO OF HER HANDS, DARIUS.
NICHOLAS!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH MY WIFE IN FRONT OF OUR BED-ROOM?
NICHOLAS...! I HOPE HE DOESN'T KILL HIS PARTNER.
I'VE BEEN GUARDING HER AS REQUESTED BY YOU.

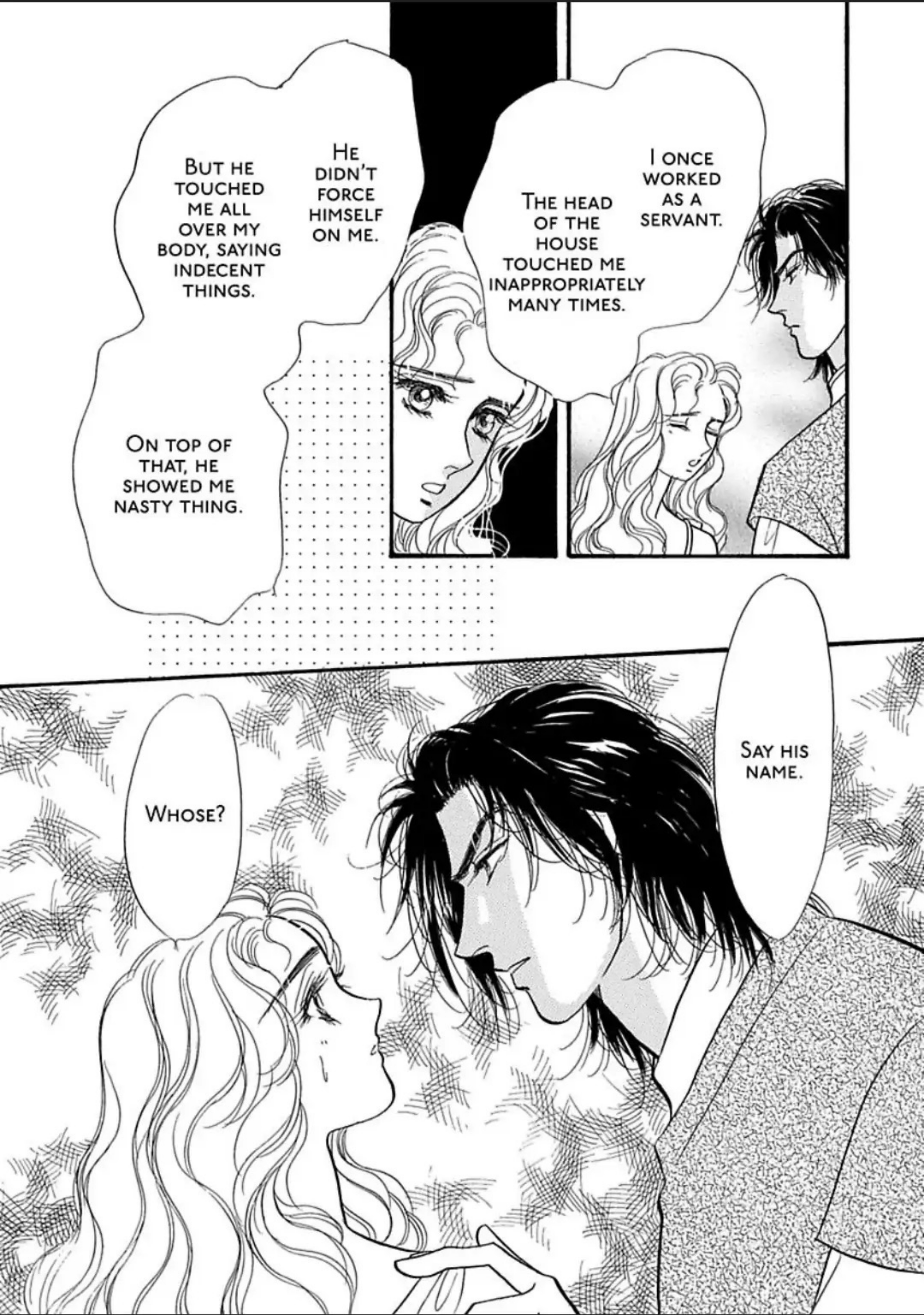

Then you're dismissed.
If you touch her ever again, that'll be the end of you.
Nicholas, what's wrong with you?
We were just talking.
You can't trust the guard you hired?

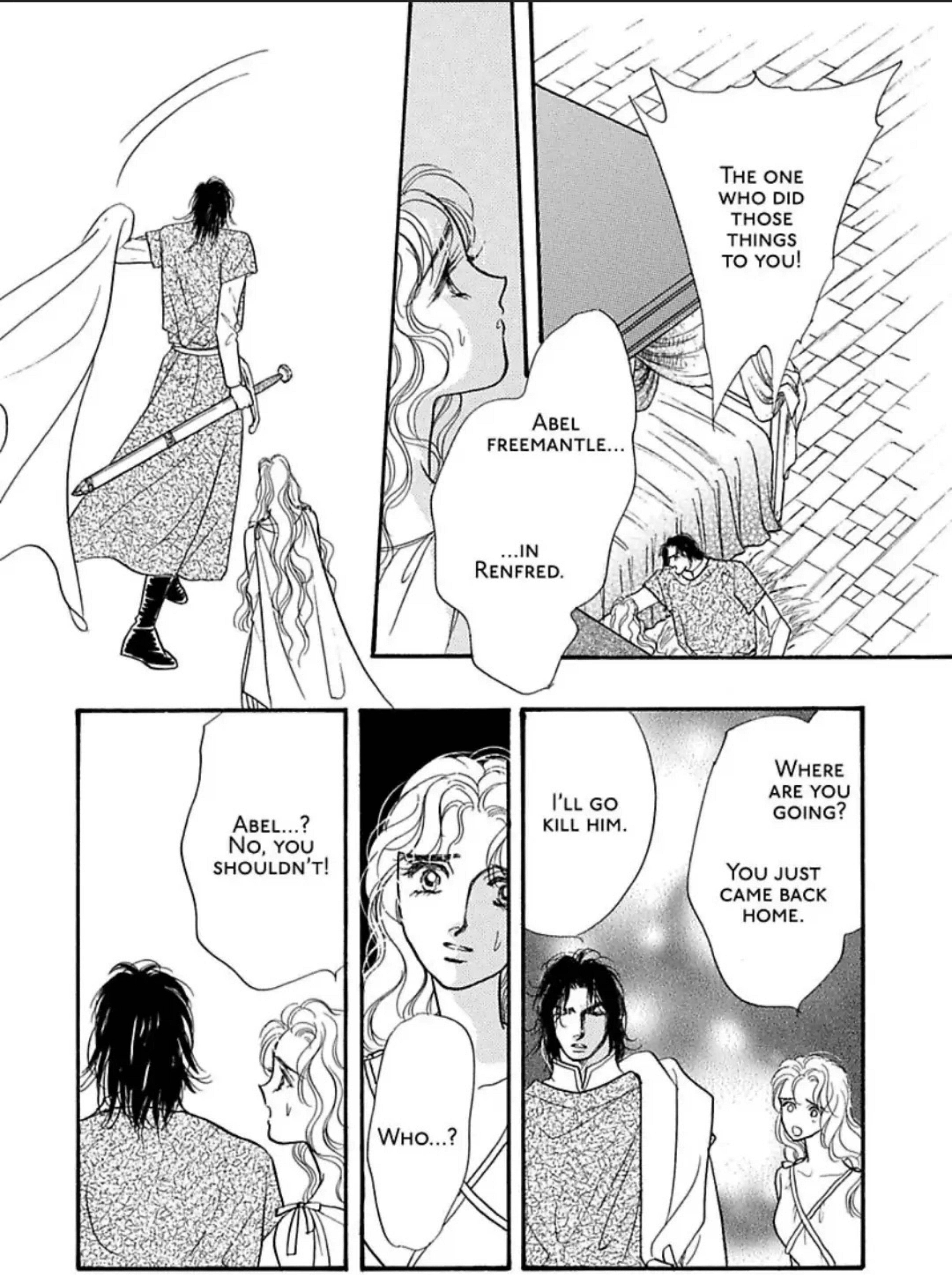

THAT'S RIGHT!
WHEN IT COMES TO YOU,
I LOSE TRUST IN EVERYONE.
ARE YOU...
...JEALOUS?
YOUR MIND AND BODY ARE MINE.
DON'T TALK TO THAT MAN EVER AGAIN.
HE *IS* JEALOUS!
WHO WOULD WANT...
...THIS TALL RED-HAIRED WOMAN?

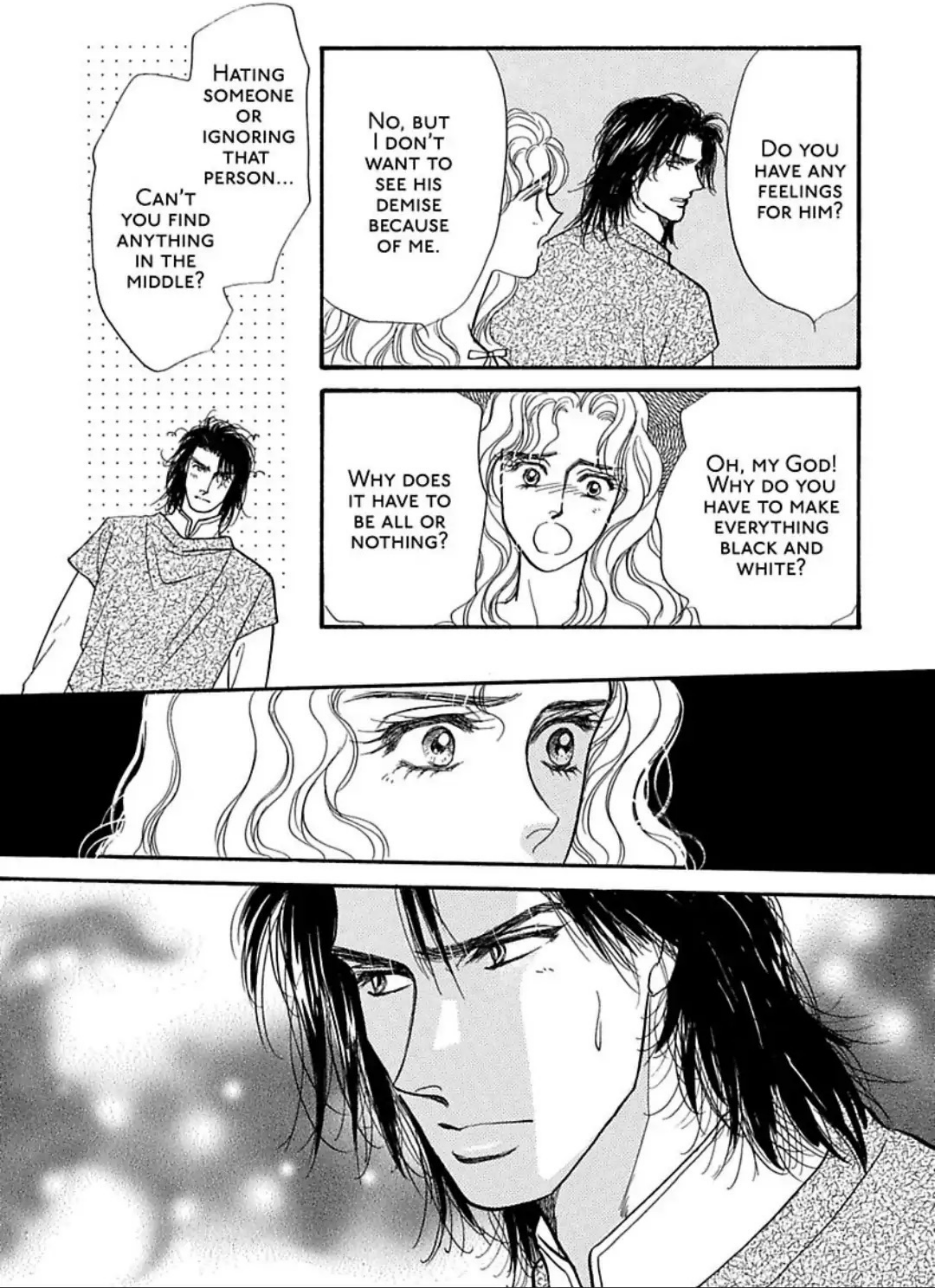

As a matter of fact, I feel restless around him.
Maybe because of his eyes.
Does your stomach hurt?
Do you need me to make you medicine?
What?
How can I take what you make for me?
I don't want you to seize the opportunity to poison me.
Your blood is tainted. How can I trust you?
Oh, dear...

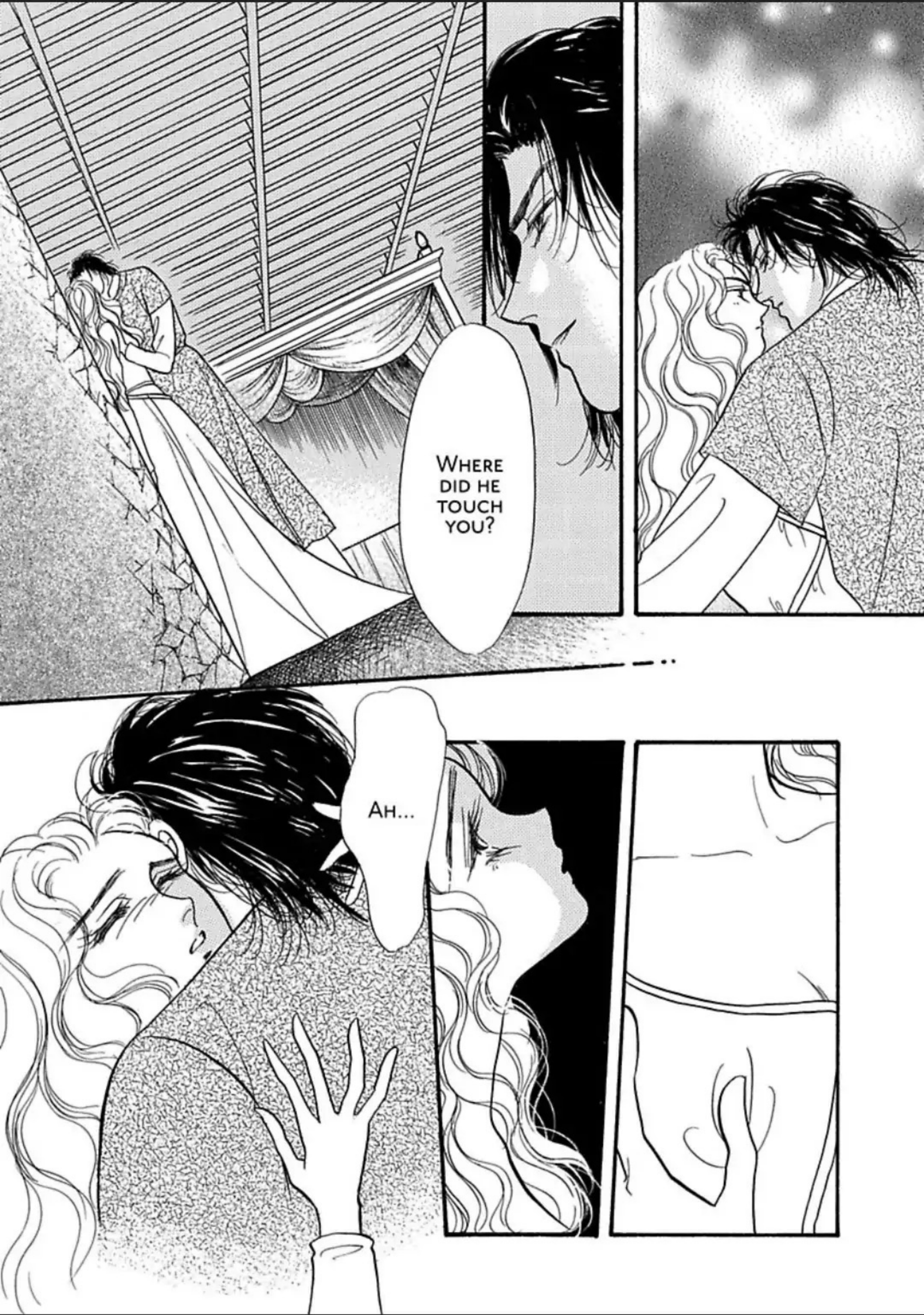

I'm purely a target of his revenge.
How could I mistake that for jealousy?
Don't perform your duties as a wife or servant.
You'll be my slave who'll do what I say.
You savage! There are no slaves in England!
If you need an obedient woman, you may want to look elsewhere! Like Asia!
There's a lot to learn from Asia.
For instance, women there let their hair down only in front of their husbands.
Now, take it down.
I want to see.

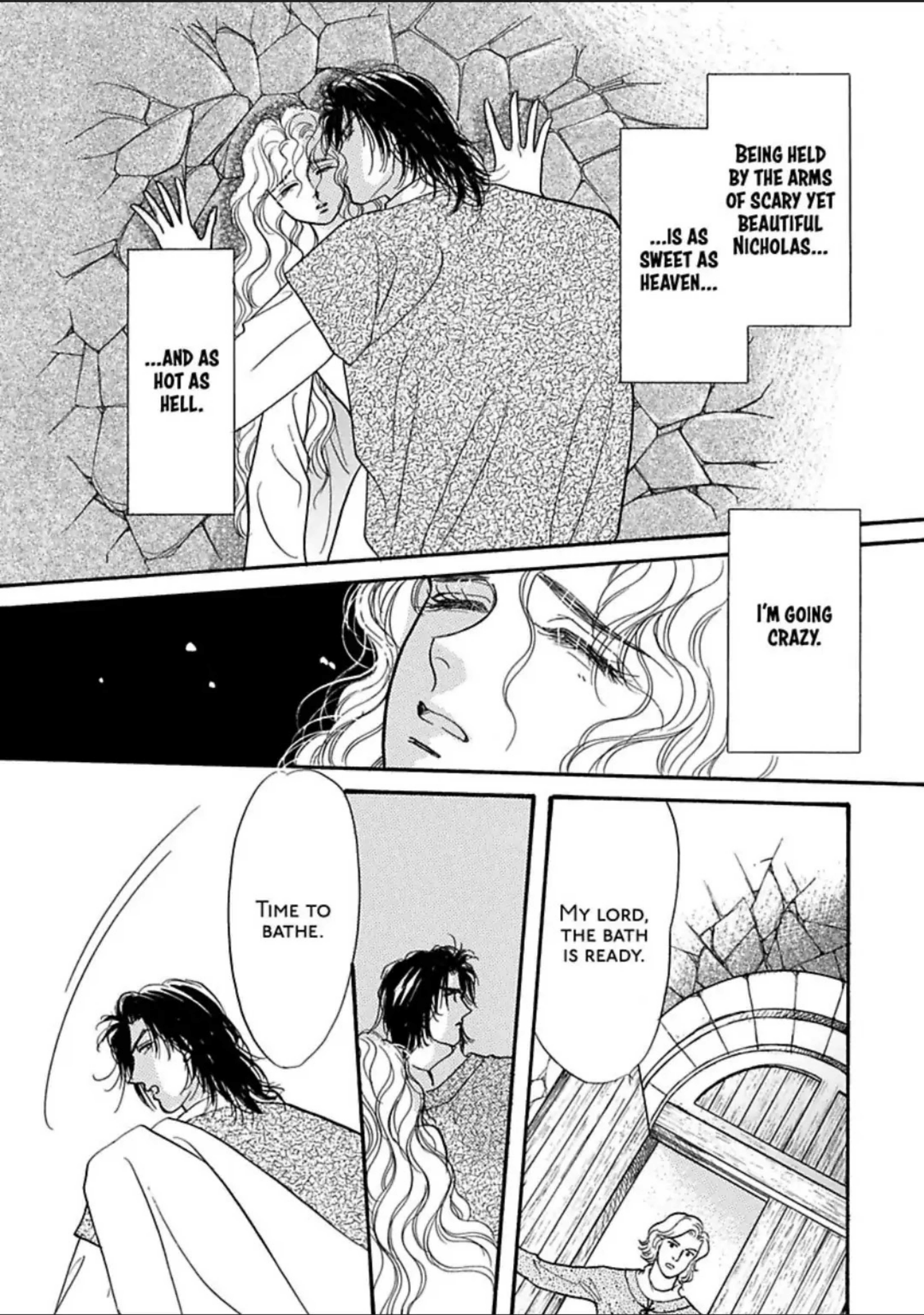

Take a bath after that.
Are you telling me to take my clothes off in front of you?
Gillian,
have you been forced to sleep with a man?
No way.
Why do you ask?
Because you get very scared about sleeping with me.
I am your husband,
and you act like you're about to faint when I simply ask you to take your hair down.
Of course I am.
You're the man who takes pleasure in being violent toward me.

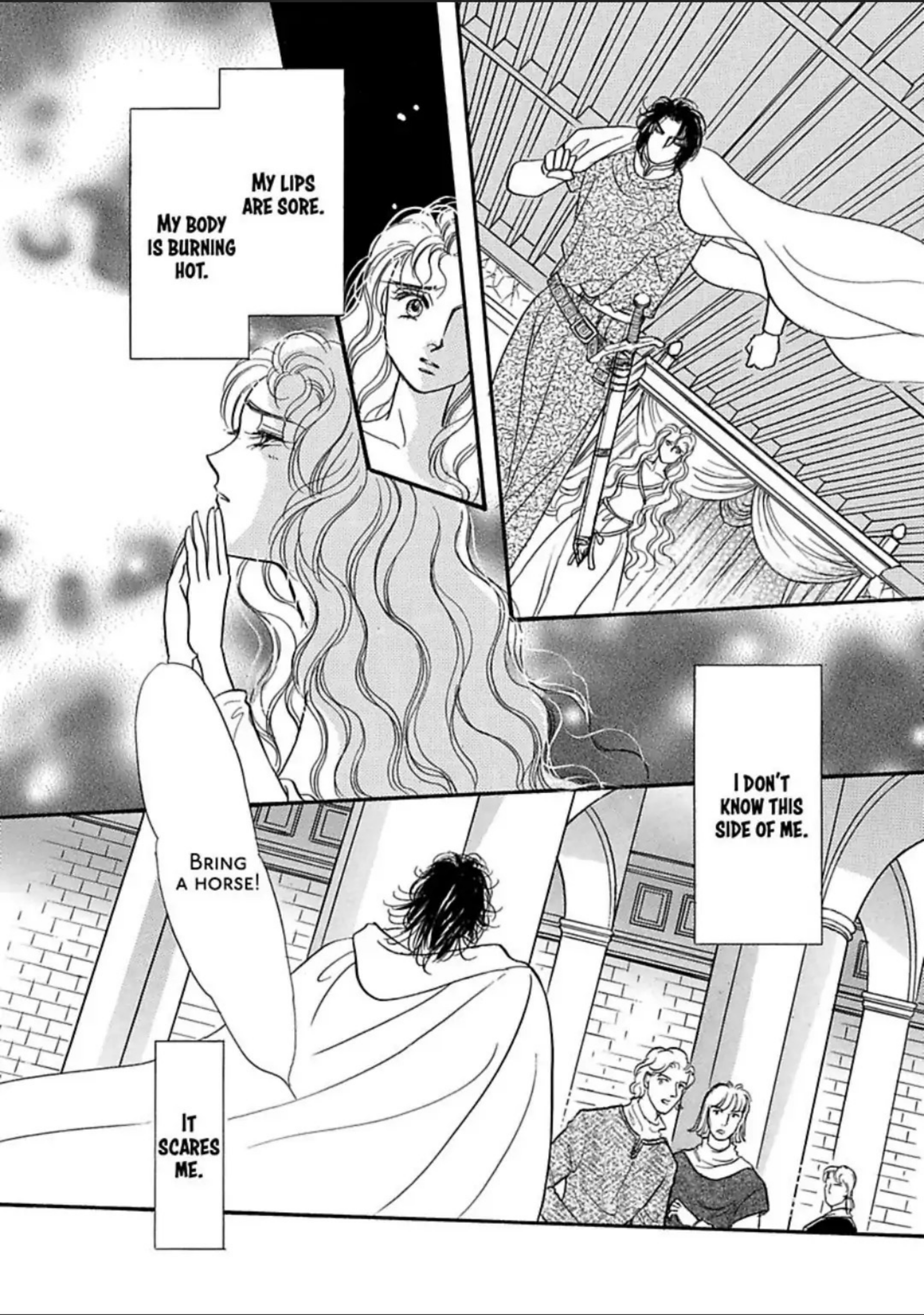

I once worked as a servant.
The head of the house touched me inappropriately many times.
He didn't force himself on me.
But he touched me all over my body, saying indecent things.
On top of that, he showed me nasty thing.
Say his name.
Whose?

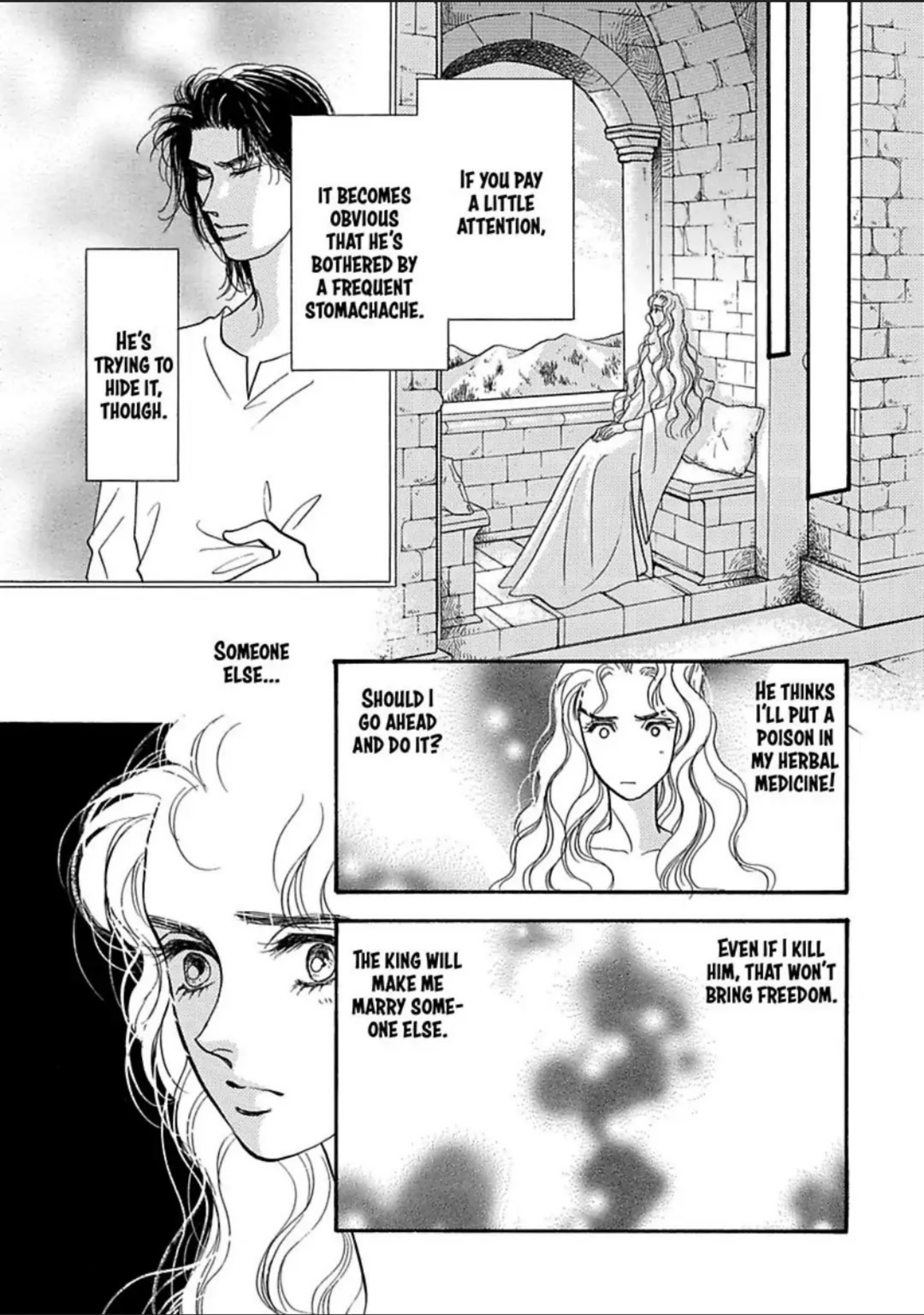

The one who did those things to you!
Abel Freemantle...
...in Renfred.
Where are you going?
You just came back home.
I'll go kill him.
Who...?
Abel...? No, you shouldn't!

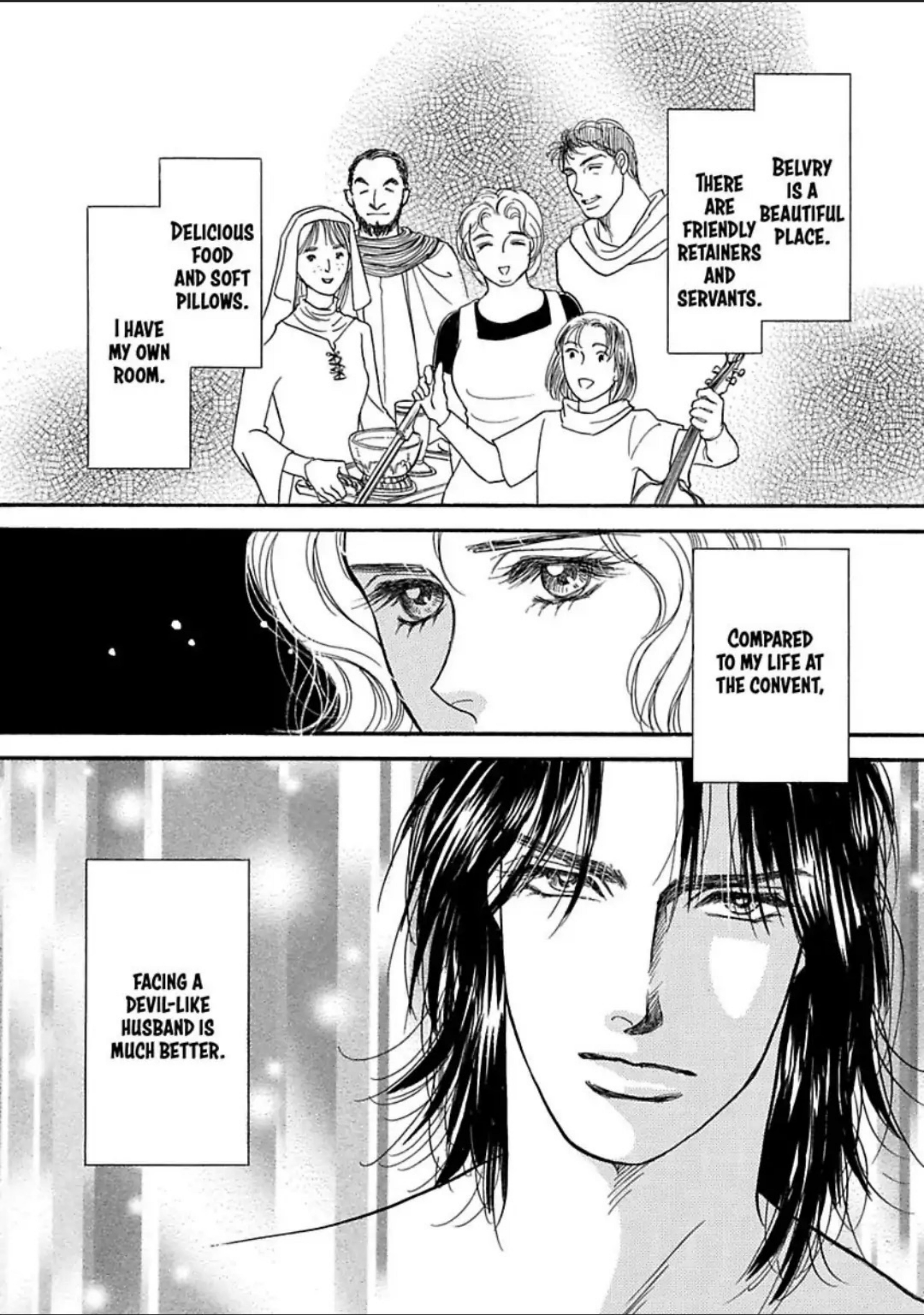

Do you have any feelings for him?
No, but I don't want to see his demise because of me.
Hating someone or ignoring that person... Can't you find anything in the middle?
Oh, my God! Why do you have to make everything black and white?
Why does it have to be all or nothing?

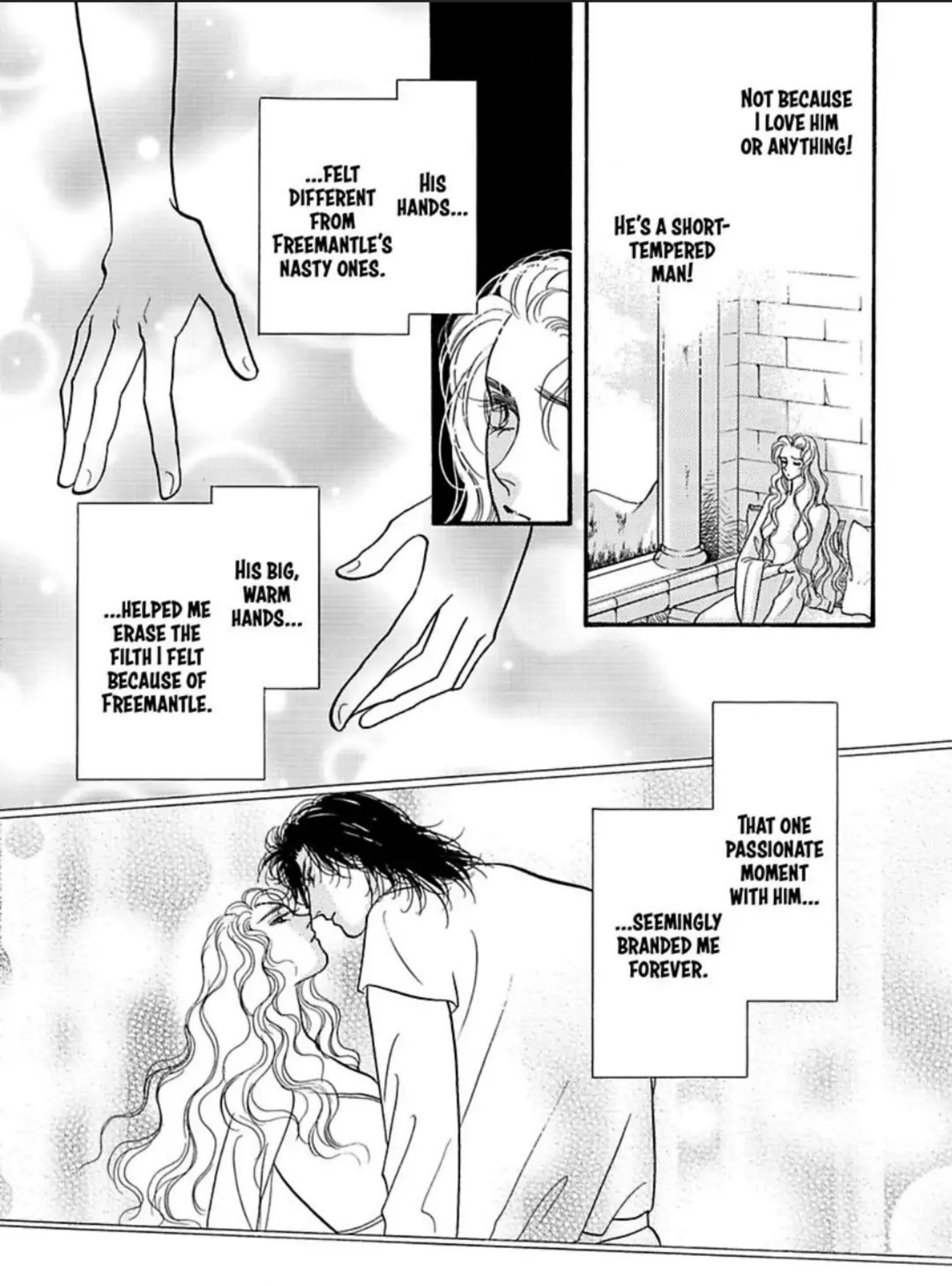

Where did he touch you?
Ah...

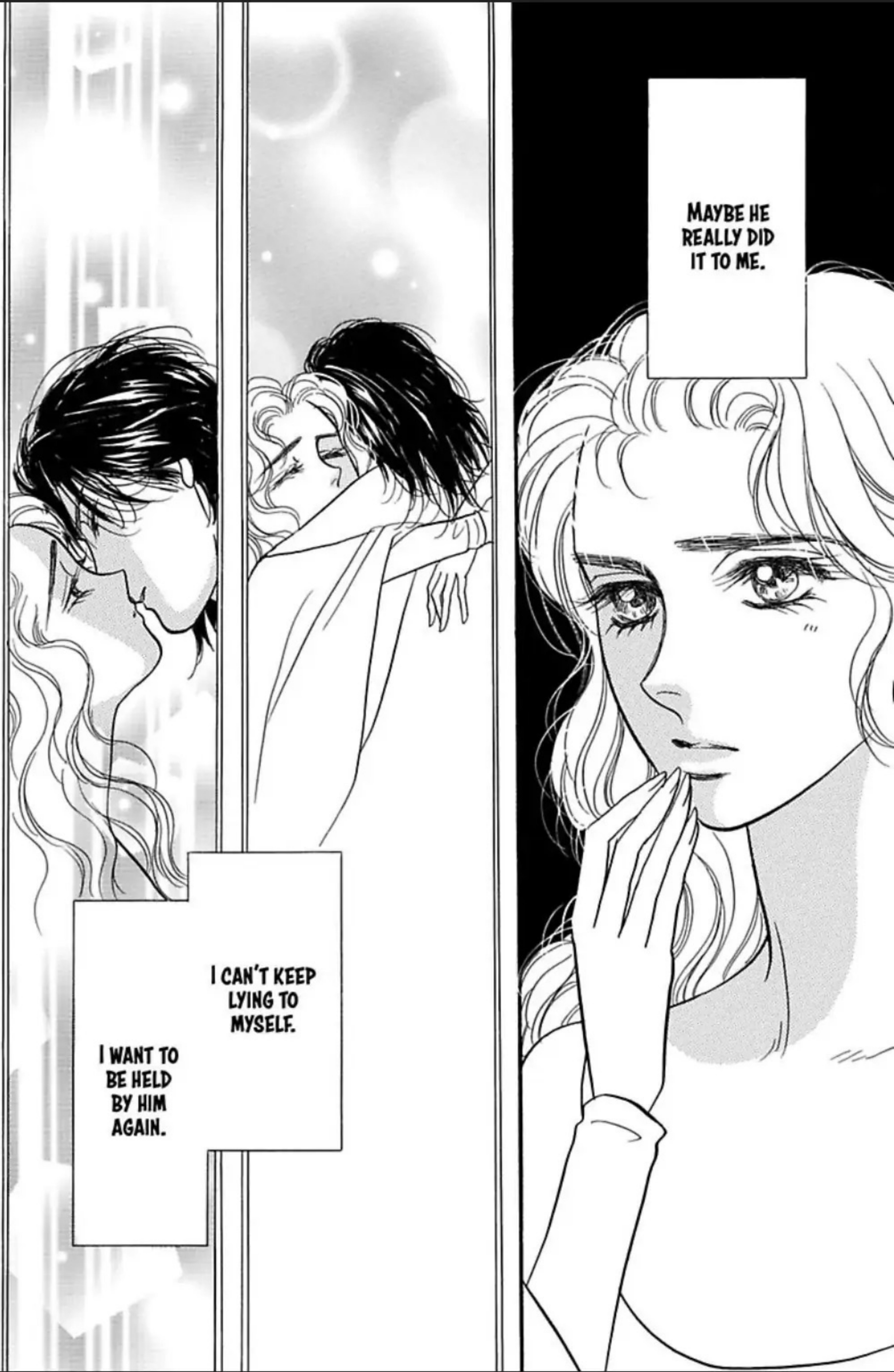

Being held by the arms of scary yet beautiful Nicholas...
...is as sweet as heaven...
...and as hot as hell.
I'm going crazy.
My lord, the bath is ready.
Time to bathe.

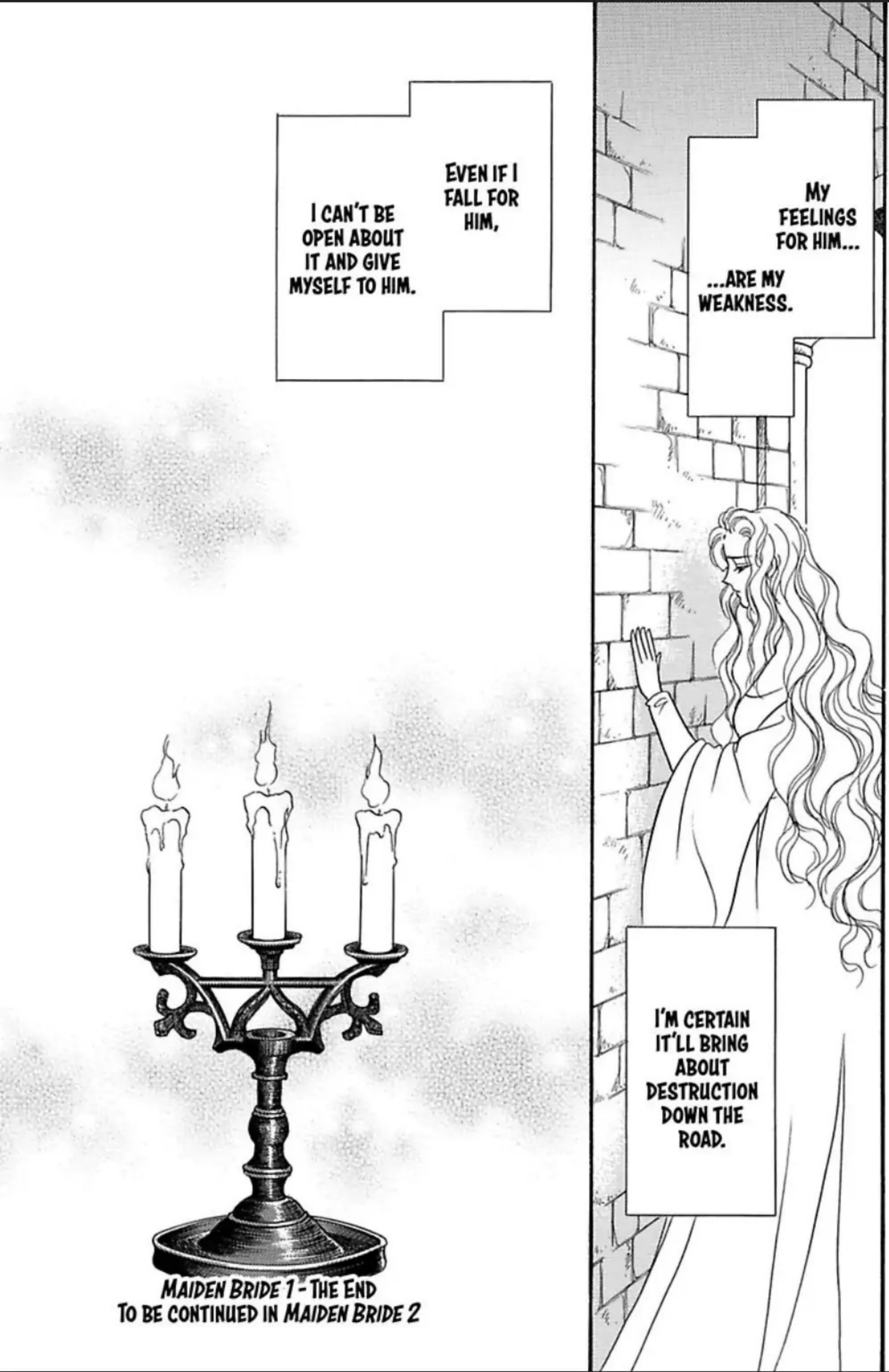

My lips are sore.
My body is burning hot.
I don't know this side of me.
Bring a horse!
It scares me.


If you pay a little attention,
It becomes obvious that he's bothered by a frequent stomachache.
He's trying to hide it, though.
He thinks I'll put a poison in my herbal medicine!
Should I go ahead and do it?
Even if I kill him, that won't bring freedom.
The king will make me marry someone else.
Someone else...]


Belvry is a beautiful place.
There are friendly retainers and servants.
Delicious food and soft pillows.
I have my own room.
Compared to my life at the convent,
facing a devil-like husband is much better.


Not because I love him or anything!
He's a short-tempered man!
His hands...
...felt different from Freemantle's nasty ones.
His big, warm hands...
...helped me erase the filth I felt because of Freemantle.
That one passionate moment with him...
...seemingly branded me forever.


MAYBE HE REALLY DID IT TO ME.
I CAN'T KEEP LYING TO MYSELF.
I WANT TO BE HELD BY HIM AGAIN.


MY FEELINGS FOR HIM...
...ARE MY WEAKNESS.
I'M CERTAIN IT'LL BRING ABOUT DESTRUCTION DOWN THE ROAD.
EVEN IF I FALL FOR HIM,
I CAN'T BE OPEN ABOUT IT AND GIVE MYSELF TO HIM.

MAIDEN BRIDE 1 - THE END
TO BE CONTINUED IN *MAIDEN BRIDE 2*

Maiden Bride 1

Art by: Nanao Hidaka © 2005
Original novel by: Deborah Simmons
Copyright © 1998 by Deborah Siegenthal

All rights reserved including the right of reproduction in whole or in part in any form. This edition is published by arrangement with Harlequin Books S.A.

® and TM are trademarks owned and used by the trademark owner and/or its licensee. Trademarks marked with ® are registered in Japan and in other countries.

All characters in this book are fictitious. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

Published by Harlequin Japan,
a Division of K.K. HarperCollins Japan, 2020